



NEW YORK STATE  
NETWORK FOR  
YOUTH SUCCESS



# QUALITY SELF-ASSESSMENT (QSA) TOOL

USER'S GUIDE · THIRD EDITION

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*Photos included within this User’s Guide are generously provided courtesy of the Department of Youth and Community Development and The 50 State Afterschool Network.*

# WELCOME



**T**he New York State Network for Youth Success is very pleased to publish this updated User's Guide for the Quality Self-Assessment (QSA) Tool, Third Edition. We hope this User's Guide offers practical insight on the self-assessment process and aids you in your quality improvement and planning efforts. We wish you the best of luck as you use the QSA Tool to mobilize the stakeholders in your afterschool program to strengthen your efforts to provide participants with positive learning and development opportunities. We look forward to hearing from you as the QSA Tool is incorporated into your program planning, development, and continuous growth. Please do not hesitate to contact the New York State Network for Youth Success if you have any questions or wish to offer feedback about the self-assessment process, the QSA Tool, or this User's Guide.

The Network for Youth Success would like to thank the many partners, colleagues, and practitioners that contributed their expertise to the QSA Tool and User's Guide over the years. This would not have been possible without their generosity. Please view the full list of acknowledgements at <http://networkforyouthsuccess.org/qa/acknowledgements/>.

Sincerely,

The New York State Network for Youth Success

# HOW WE CAN HELP



The New York State Network for Youth Success' **Quality Self-Assessment (QSA) Tool** is designed to help you get the most out of the self-assessment process for your afterschool program. As an experienced youth practitioner, you have likely begun the self-assessment process to enhance and strengthen the quality of your program. In this guide, you'll find practical strategies gathered from the field to assist and support you as you formalize and build upon existing program improvement efforts.

## HOW THIS USER'S GUIDE CAN HELP

A quality program is one that is reflective and willing to improve, change, and grow. It believes in successful outcomes for its participants. It understands that improving program quality is an ongoing process.

Self-assessment provides an important opportunity for programs to identify strengths and weaknesses free from the pressures of external monitoring and evaluation. Organizations that have linked the self-assessment process to decision-making report they meet their goals and achieve success.

The QSA Tool is a resource that builds upon the experience, knowledge, and research of afterschool practitioners and policymakers from across the country. It's called a "tool" because it is meant to help your organization grow over time, and it is designed to be tailored according to your needs. It is not meant to be used as a device for judging the program as "good" or "bad." Rather, the QSA Tool is intended to be used as a guide for reflecting on your program and making every part of it the best that it can be. How you use it depends on your organization's needs, strengths, challenges, maturity, and capacity.

The QSA Tool will help your organization recognize what it's doing well and uncover strategies you can implement to improve on weaker areas.

## AN OVERVIEW OF THE QSA TOOL

The QSA Tool is organized around the essential elements of an effective afterschool program, all of which come from evidence-based practice. Under each element, you'll find a list of characteristics that describe this practice. We call these "Quality Indicators." An asterisk (\*) next to an indicator denotes that it is critical to address prior to program start-up or, for programs currently operating, as soon as possible.

Each indicator is broken down into four levels of mastery. At each level, you'll find examples that describe what that level of mastery might look like in a real program. These examples are there to help take the guesswork out of the self-assessment process. You should use them to help you determine which level sounds most like your program/organization. At each indicator, you should ask yourself, "Is my program most like a 1, 2, 3, or 4?" As part of the self-assessment aspect of the QSA Tool, you will use this rating system to assess your program's success in practicing each of the indicators within an element. This will help you see where your program excels, and where it needs some work. Hopefully, you'll be able to uncover patterns or trends that will aid you in the improvement process.

### QSA TOOL PERFORMANCE LEVELS



Programs are expected to strive for a satisfactory performance level (3) on all of the indicators within each of the elements of program quality. Over time, programs should continue to strive for an excellent performance level (4). At this level of performance, programs consistently show evidence of promising practices throughout all program elements, serve as a model for other afterschool programs, and develop and support staff such that they could serve as coaches and mentors for other practitioners.

Many of the indicators are specific to practices at a given site, therefore it is recommended that most elements be considered on the individual site level. Some elements, however, require looking at organizational practices and may have some indicators that are likely to be rated consistently across a multi-site organization.

The QSA Tool is meant to be used in concert with other formal and informal evaluation methods, such as parent and staff surveys, staff meetings, and external monitoring and evaluation.

# PROCESS FOR USING THE QSA TOOL IN YOUR PROGRAM

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## STEP 1: Determine Who Will Lead the Self-Assessment Process

The self-assessment leader is the person who takes charge of the QSA process. This will be the first person to take the self-assessment (sometimes abbreviated “QSA”) before initiating group discussions. We recommend the self-assessment leader go through all of the elements and become thoroughly familiar with all aspects of the program and organization. This is a critical step because once the process is underway, other stakeholders will be going through and observing the program as well. It is best if the self-assessment leader has already considered these aspects, so that they will be able to answer questions about the program and the organization as they arise.

After taking the QSA, the leader will be responsible for engaging the staff, stakeholders, and other parties in the process. In collaboration with staff and stakeholders, the self-assessment leader:

- determines how and when the QSA review process should take place;
- selects who will facilitate discussions;
- decides how data and findings will be compiled and shared; and
- pushes the self-assessment process forward and ensures it leads to planning and program improvement.

Site directors often take on the role of self-assessment leader. However, other positions may as well, such as a program director or a staff member that is not at the site director level. If you are engaged in a formal evaluation process, then this role should not be held by that evaluator. The QSA Tool is meant to be a low-stakes process to help your organization discover aspects of self-improvement. It is not meant for use as a formal evaluation.

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## STEP 2: Determine Who Will Be Involved in the QSA Tool Quality Improvement Process

### STAKEHOLDERS

The QSA Tool is designed to encourage all stakeholders to have a voice. Their viewpoints and opinions could help improve programming by gaining additional knowledge, advice, and support. Diverse feedback can result in valuable or unique insight into your program.

#### Key Stakeholders Can Be:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Site directors</li><li>✓ Program staff</li><li>✓ Youth participant</li><li>✓ Parents, guardians, and family members</li><li>✓ School administrators</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Partner organizations</li><li>✓ Funders, board members, and external evaluators (we encourage you to keep your QSA process as low-stakes as possible, so carefully consider inclusion of these stakeholders)</li></ul> |
|---|--|

Together, these stakeholders will form the focus group that will participate in in-depth discussions regarding the self-assessment and quality improvement process. This focus group is how you will build communication, consensus, and collective buy-in that is critical to the growth and strength of the program.

Each stakeholder will take the self-assessment individually, on either one element or multiple elements, and share their feedback. This way you're not reliant on just one person's idea about how the program is doing and can get a better overall picture of the program.

Stakeholders should be thoughtfully included in each discussion. You do not need to include every stakeholder in every discussion, but it's important to fully include them on the elements where their involvement might help you get to the next level.

## **FACILITATOR**

For focus group discussions, you will want to designate one person as a facilitator. Your self-assessment leader can also act as your group facilitator if they have the necessary facilitation skills outlined below and feel that all focus group members will be comfortable sharing their opinion with the self-assessment leader in the room. If this is not the case, it may be more effective to give this role to a different person so that the discussion is led by a neutral voice and more comfortably encourages openness and fairness in conversation.

The facilitator of the process doesn't necessarily have to be a site director or supervisor. It could be a staff member, a parent, school personnel, or a volunteer. What is important is that a good facilitator adheres to these principles:

- Provides opportunities for everyone to contribute ideas and suggestions.
- Actively listens and connects ideas and themes as they emerge.
- Is prepared to answer questions about policies and procedures.
- Avoids personalizing what is shared in the process.
- Remains non-judgmental.
- Helps bring consensus and closure to discussions.

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## **STEP 3: Decide When to Conduct the Self-Assessment**

The QSA Tool can be used year-round to reference and apply elements of quality to your program. Likewise, you do not need to wait for a specific time of year to start the self-assessment process. There are benefits to starting the process at any time of the year, so decide which timeline makes the most sense for your program.

Start using the self-assessment tool at the beginning of your program year to create a culture of continuous improvement from the outset. The process can help build and/or strengthen relationships with your staff, establish a vision for the year, and identify specific goals to achieve. It also allows you the full program year to make the improvements on your action plan before your program may shift or stop for the summer.

During the mid-year, the self-assessment tool allows you to look back on the programming and assess what's working and/or what needs to be improved. Many programs also find mid-year self-assessments to be especially helpful if they are creating an improvement plan off the combined results from their self-assessment and a more formal assessment or evaluation.

At the end of the year, self-assessment allows you to look back on the entire year and compile a thorough improvement plan. You'll be able to prepare for the next programming year by determining what needs to be adjusted and what needs to be removed.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER:

• **Program Commitments:** Think about your program’s annual calendar and identify the times of year when it is most likely that you, your staff, and your board members might be able to dedicate time to the QSA process.

• **Staff Turnover:** If your program has a lot of staff turnover, such as when you employ AmeriCorps members or college students, then starting the self-assessment at the beginning of the year may be the best strategy for your program. Staff members have more buy in and are therefore more likely to make program improvements when they are involved in the full self-assessment process.

There are many ways to implement the QSA process in your program. While having the self-assessment leader complete the full self-assessment themselves at least once a year is a good way to keep an eye on overall program quality and ensure focus is given to the areas most relevant for the program each year, it is not necessary to complete the full QSA process with all stakeholders across the full tool each year. You may decide to complete the full tool each year if that works for your program, but many programs find it more efficient to have only the self-assessment leader and/or the program staff complete the full self-assessment and use those results to determine which specific area(s) should receive the full QSA process with all stakeholders (surveying, focus group discussions, action planning, and implementation).

Below are some examples of some common methods programs use to implement the QSA process. Each has its own pros and cons.

Strategy	Definition	Pros	Cons
All Elements at Once	Assess all elements simultaneously and determine appropriate action plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good overall view of program quality.</li> <li>• Covers all elements faster.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can’t go as in-depth with each element.</li> <li>• Creates competing priorities on the action plan.</li> </ul>
One Element Each Week/Month	Prioritize a new element to assess and develop an action plan for each week/month until all elements are addressed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus given to each element.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates competing priorities on the action plan.</li> </ul>
One Element Until Improvements Are Complete	Concentrate on assessing and improving all aspects of one element at a time. Do not move on to a new element until improvements are complete in current focus area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-depth treatment of each element.</li> <li>• Focused improvements made.</li> <li>• Participants become familiar with the entire lifecycle of the QSA process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes longer to complete all elements.</li> </ul>

Some programs also start with one method and then move to another. For example, when you are just starting with the tool, you may wish to begin with only one element. You could pick an area of particular need, or an area where few improvements will be needed in order to get a full sense of the process without becoming overwhelmed.

Starting with an element where you feel you may be able to make some recognizable improvements quickly may also be a good way to get stakeholders excited to move forward with the process. After completing an element fully and getting comfortable with the process, you may then wish to move on to another method, such as one element each week or month, that will help you move through the whole tool more quickly.

The more you use the QSA tool, the more comfortable you will be in determining the right method and timing for your program.

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#### **STEP 4: Gather and Compile Stakeholder Feedback**

Once you have identified your stakeholders as described in Step 2, invite them to take the self-assessment on their own. Some training on the structure of the tool may be required to help stakeholders understand how to use the tool, and this should be tailored to the needs of your specific stakeholders. You may also wish to set up time for them to observe your program in action.

The self-assessment may be completed in many formats. Some programs find electronic surveys helpful to ease in the compilation process. Others find paper surveys to be more effective for their stakeholders. Both paper and electronic surveys are available on the QSA website. Programs also find that modifying the tool is helpful when including program participants in the self-assessment process, sometimes surveying younger participants verbally one-on-one or in groups and/or using simplified survey questions.

After you survey your stakeholders, compile those results and plan your focus group meeting with the stakeholders. At these meetings, you'll discuss the results and come to consensus on the ratings. At this point, you will also choose priorities to focus on for improvement.

The QSA Tool encourages users to indicate priorities and determine the appropriate timeframe for improvements using the following categories:

**Right Now:** Area will be addressed immediately.

**This Year:** Area will be addressed during the program year.

**Next Year:** Area will be re-evaluated prior to the start of the next program year.

Use a template like the one below to record what was discussed at your focus group meeting with stakeholders and determine what the next steps are moving forward. A blank version of this template is available on the QSA website. Please note that individuals who could be or will be named the “Person(s) Responsible” for Improvement Steps should be present at the focus group meeting in which this process is being discussed to increase buy in.

**Sample of How to Record the Outcomes of the Focus Group Meetings:**

Quality Self-Assessment Tool: Program Improvement Inventory						
Organization/Site: ABC Youth Program at XYZ Elementary						
Date: October 15, 20XX						
Attendees: <i>Program Director:</i> Juan; <i>Site Director:</i> Anastasia; <i>Program Staff:</i> Hara, Dayshawn; <i>Family Members:</i> Judy, Aarif; <i>Youth:</i> Joselyn, Shawn; <i>School Staff:</i> Ms. Garcia, Coach Williams; <i>Community Partner:</i> Sally						
Program Element	Quality Indicator	Performance Level(s)	Improvement Steps and Strategies	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline for Improvement	Resources Needed
1. Environment and Climate	2. Ensures program space is safe, clean, and appropriately equipped.	1: 9 responses 2: 2 responses 3: 0 responses 4: 0 responses	1. Hold fire and safety drills immediately. 2. Ask registration agency how many fire and safety drills are required each year. 3. Create a cleaning schedule for staff requiring initials daily after cleaning. 4. Retrain staff on cleaning procedures.	Anastasia, Site Director	Right Now	None
1. Environment and Climate	6. Provides healthy and nutritious snacks and/or supper.	1:0 responses 2: 11 responses 3:0 responses 4:0 responses	1. Survey participants on the types of food they would like for snack. 2. Survey parents on the types of foods they would like provided for snack. 3. Contact the NYS Department of Health to determine eligibility for snack reimbursements through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). 4. Request bids from vendors that provide CACFP creditable snacks aligned with participant and parent survey results. 5. Contract with a vendor to serve snack daily.	Juan, Program Director  Anastasia, Site Director  Hara and Dayshawn, Program Staff  Judy, Parent Coordinator	This Year (by March)	Youth Survey  Parent Survey  Staff member to work with vendor and track snacks for CACFP
5. Programming and Activities	6. Offers a blend of high-quality academic support, including tutoring,	1: 2 responses 2: 7 responses 3: 2 responses	1. Hold meeting with staff and youth to discuss adding designated study time to the program schedule. 2. Provide staff training on appropriate academic and homework support. 3. Add designated study time to the program schedule.	Anastasia, Site Director	This Year (by January)	Staff training Space for tutoring
	study hall, and/or homework help as appropriate to the program as well as enrichment opportunities in arts, recreation, and health.	4: 0 responses	4. Add ELA tutoring to the schedule once per week for students in need from Ms. Garcia.			

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## STEP 5: Action Planning

Now that you have taken a bird's eye view of your program practices, you should be ready to try new ideas, strategies, processes, and solutions for affecting change within your program. It is time to develop an action plan based on your team's findings.

Once your group has identified which areas it will focus on, you can create specific action plans to address those areas. Remember that it is not necessary to do this for every area of the QSA tool, every year. Use action planning only for the specific areas that your group has elected to go through the full QSA process.

Below is an example of how to use an Action Plan Template. Notice how the plan uses SMART goals (goals which are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-Based, and Time Bound) to identify how the program will work to improve in very clear, specific, and time-sensitive language that clearly identifies what is happening and who is responsible.

Developing a manageable action plan that is realistic and specific is a key factor to ensuring your team's success. The action plan helps your team stay on track by identifying the steps you should take to achieve program goals and the timeframe in which they should be completed. Be sure to designate a person responsible for each step and to check in periodically. The plan serves as your roadmap as you take steps to improve and enhance the quality of your program.

While this plan might look overwhelming at first, it is structured to help you make improvements efficiently and effectively, and to increase the likelihood that improvements will be made. Taking the time to fill in a detailed plan like this one at the beginning will save you much more time throughout the rest of the process.



## Sample Action Plan:

Action Plan for Quality Improvement						
Organization/Site: ABC Youth Program at XYZ Elementary						
Point Person/Facilitator: Juan, Program Director						
Target Element: Element 5: Programming/Activities						
Goal 1: To provide high-quality academic support through offering daily homework help as well as ELA tutoring once per week for students in need by January 15, 20XY.						
Indicators/Scores showing need: Offers a blend of high-quality academic support, including tutoring, study hall, and/or homework help as appropriate to the program as well as enrichment opportunities in arts, recreation, and health: 2			Additional Information: Participants noted that they did not feel supported academically, and did not receive homework assistance unless they specifically asked for it. Parents requested that students have time to work on their homework during the afterschool program. Staff members requested training on providing academic support.			
Change Needed: Staff will effectively support participants in understanding and working on their homework. Designated time during the program schedule will be added for participants to work on their homework, with additional time offered for those participants who wish to continue working on their homework past the allotted time. Optional English language arts (ELA) tutoring will be offered for those participants who wish to take advantage of this service.						
Activities to Create Improvement:	Person Accountable:	Begins:	Ends:	Check In Points:	Resources:	Staff Development:
Site Director will host a staff meeting to discuss adding designated homework time into the program schedule daily.	Anastasia, Site Director	10/15	10/21	10/18	Staff meeting space	
Site Director will meet with ELA tutor to set up a tutoring schedule.	Anastasia, Site Director	10/21	10/25	10/23	Meeting space	
Staff will receive training on appropriate and effective academic and homework support.	Juan, Program Director	10/21	12/16	10/31, 11/30, 12/9	Trainer, funds for professional development, training space	Training on academic and homework support
Staff will host a discussion with participants to decide on the structure and timing of the new schedule including homework time daily and optional ELA tutoring. Staff and participants will review rules/expectations for the activities.	Hara, Program Staff Dayshawn, Program Staff	10/25	11/18	11/9	Flip chart or whiteboard, markers	
Site Director will create and post updated program schedules.	Anastasia, Site Director	11/18	11/20		Program schedules	
Site Director and staff will inform parents of the updated schedule, and will supply sign-up sheets for ELA tutoring.	Anastasia, Site Director	11/20	12/9	12/1	Program schedules, information sheets, sign-up sheets	
Site Director will supply ELA tutor with tutoring schedule and list of participants.	Anastasia, Site Director	12/10	12/13		Tutoring schedule, list of participants	
Staff will implement and support daily homework time, and will offer additional time for those students who wish to continue working on their homework past the designated time.	Hara, Program Staff Dayshawn, Program Staff	1/15	Ongoing	2/15, 3/15, 4/15, 6/15	Space for homework time, study aids and manipulatives, privacy dividers	
ELA tutor will implement weekly tutoring for participants who sign-up.	Ms. Garcia, ELA Tutor	1/15	Ongoing	2/15, 3/15, 4/15, 6/15	Space for tutoring, study materials, progress logs	
Program will survey participants and parents on the effectiveness of the daily homework help and optional weekly ELA tutoring.	Anastasia, Site Director Hara, Program Staff Dayshawn, Program Staff	3/18	3/21	2/15	Homework surveys, ELA Tutoring Surveys	
Program will create updated action plan based on survey results.	Anastasia, Site Director Hara, Program Staff Dayshawn, Program Staff Ms. Garcia, ELA Tutor	3/24	3/31	3/30	Updated action plan	

## Ways to Create Accountability:

- Plan collaboratively with all who will be responsible for completing tasks.
- Write each goal as a SMART goal, and label specific, individual steps in the action plan.
- Assign all tasks to the appropriate person (Ideally not all tasks are assigned to the same person).
- Create specific deadlines/check-in points and add them to your calendar.
- Assign a leader to oversee improvements and check-ins.
- Report results back to stakeholders.

Once you have the plan in place, it is time to implement the action plan. The self-assessment leader should be sure to check in with the person(s) responsible for each step at the designated check in points to ensure progress continues to move. If steps don't move forward as anticipated, come back together with the team and adjust the plan with updated steps and dates as needed. Note any unanticipated barriers that arise to take into consideration during future QSA work and action planning.

## After the goals have been completed:

### 1. Celebrate!

Going through the self-assessment and improvement process can be challenging and time consuming. Your dedication shows how much your program cares about the children it serves. Your staff and all of your stakeholders should take a moment to recognize your accomplishments and be proud of the good work you are doing for your community.

### 2. Reassess & Review:

Review for improvements that were made, as well as what worked and what did not. Use the results from the re-assessment to determine any changes that need to be made to the action plan. Gather your focus group to discuss and determine what needs to be done differently compared to the last action plan.

### 3. Move On to a New Element:

If all the improvements were made as intended and the group determines that no additional improvements need to be made, move back to the beginning of the process and focus on another area of the program.

### 4. Recheck Periodically:

Check periodically by reassessing the areas you have focused on. This is vitally important to maintaining your program quality through staff turnover, introduction of new units or curriculum, or other anticipated or unanticipated events that can change the program and program quality. If the quality hasn't been maintained, return to the improvement process when you evaluated each element and create a new action plan.

# ELEMENT 1

## Environment & Climate

*A quality program provides a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment for all participants, staff members, and families.*

### A QUALITY PROGRAM:

#### Physical

1. \*Provides a stimulating, engaging, welcoming, and supportive environment for all participants.
2. \*Ensures program space is safe, clean, and appropriately equipped.
3. \*Develops, implements, and shares approved safety plans and procedures with staff, families, and host school as applicable.
4. \*Provides effective supervision of participants by an approved adult at all times.
5. \*Develops and manages effective arrival and dismissal procedures and plans for safe travel home.
6. \*Provides healthy and nutritious snacks and/or supper.

PERFORMANCE LEVEL				PLAN TO IMPROVE		
1	2	3	4	RIGHT NOW	THIS YEAR	NEXT YEAR

#### Emotional

7. Is aware of, records, and supports staff to address the mental and physical needs of participants in compliance with HIPAA and FERPA.
8. Establishes, maintains, and communicates a respectful, inclusive code of conduct with staff, participants, and their families.
9. Applies an approach to behavior management that includes positive reinforcement and intentional social-emotional skill-building.
10. Intentionally plans for, welcomes, and creates an environment that actively supports participants with diverse abilities.
11. Embraces dignity for all participants, fosters a sense of belonging, and promotes physical and emotional safety through a culture of support, inclusion services, and mutual respect.


NOTES:

# Environment & Climate

A quality program provides a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment for all participants, staff members, and families.

A quality program has a space that supports positive youth development and encourages positive interactions among peers and adults. All feel safe from intimidation, teasing, bullying, and violence, and mutual respect is encouraged. The physical space is well-equipped and safe for all program activities. All health and safety codes are met.

## PHYSICAL:

### Environment & Climate, Indicator 1

\*Provides a stimulating, engaging, welcoming, and supportive environment for all participants.

#### Performance Level 1

Staff members do not greet participants as they arrive and make little or no effort to establish a personal connection with participants. There are no signs or posters in the program space. Participants have no opportunities for decision-making or to voice questions and concerns. Activities are not always facilitated by staff members, leading to unstructured activities during which participants disengage. Participants sometimes end up disinterested in participating and staff members do not encourage them to join activities.

#### Performance Level 2

Staff members try to greet participants as they arrive if they are available to do so. There are a few signs directing participants to the program space, but no signs or posters otherwise. Although there is no formal way for participants to voice questions and concerns, staff members listen to participants when they are approached to talk. Activities are usually facilitated by staff members, but participants who are disinterested in participating are not encouraged to join activities. Activities are not reorganized in order to capture disinterested participants.

#### Performance Level 3

A staff member is designated as a greeter. Staff members ensure the space is decorated with signs and posters, and have regular check-ins with participants to make sure they feel comfortable in the program space. Participants have several informal opportunities to provide their input about activities. Activities are always facilitated by a staff member, who is charged with explaining and monitoring activities. Participants who seem disinterested in the activities are encouraged to participate. Differentiated activities allow participation options for those participants disinterested in what is being offered.

#### Performance Level 4

A staff member is designated as a greeter; the greeter checks each participant in and ensures that they find the activity that they would like to join. Staff members ensure the space is decorated with signs and posters and have a daily check-in with participants to make sure they feel comfortable in the program space. Participants have both formal and informal opportunities to provide input about activities. A staff member is charged with explaining activities and engaging others who might want to join. Participants who seem disinterested in the activities being offered are told more about each activity, or provided with variations on the activity, and are encouraged to try them.

## Environment & Climate, Indicator 2

\*Ensures program space is safe, clean, and appropriately equipped.

### Performance Level 1

The program space is rarely or never cleaned, as evidenced by un-emptied trash, dust, etc. Facilities, furniture, and other materials are not checked to ensure that they are safe and free from hazards. The program provider and program host are unclear as to who is responsible for facilities maintenance. Emergency supplies are inadequate or inaccessible. Fire and safety drills are never conducted. The program space is not adequately equipped for the activities offered at the site. Physical space is not suitable for planned activities.

### Performance Level 2

The program space is cleaned when staff members have the time to do so. Facilities, furniture, and other materials are checked for safety on an ad hoc basis. The program provider and program host are not clear as to who is responsible, but make an informal effort to keep space clean. Emergency supplies are accessible, but do not adequately provide what the program needs in most emergency situations. Fire and safety drills are sometimes conducted, but are not conducted properly or frequently enough to meet requirements. No connections exist between the program host's drill procedures and the program. The program space is adequately equipped for a number of activities offered at the site. Space is available for limited science, technology, or art activities, but it is not fully equipped with the materials needed. Physical activities are limited to those that can be done in a smaller open space. The activities menu varies slightly but is dictated by space and material restraints rather than enrichment or engagement of participants.

### Performance Level 3

The program space is regularly cleaned by both program staff and professional janitors or cleaning staff. Facilities, furniture, and other materials are routinely checked and maintenance is performed when necessary. The program provider and program host are clear as to who is responsible for the maintenance of the space. Emergency supplies are accessible and provide what the program needs in most emergency situations. Several staff members are trained in how to use the supplies. Fire and safety drills are conducted regularly and meet all requirements. The program host's drill procedures incorporate the participants in the program. The program space allows staff members to run activities that use varied spaces and different types of materials and equipment. New activities can often be added to the program without concern for space restraints or lack of supplies. Some areas are available for science, technology, and art that are stocked with the materials needed. Adequate open space is available to offer a range of sports and other physical games. The activities menu is regularly updated to use new materials and equipment.

### Performance Level 4

The program space is regularly cleaned at the end of each day by both program staff and professional janitors or cleaning staff. Facilities, furniture, and other materials are frequently checked and maintenance is performed when necessary. The site director routinely conducts a walk-through of the program space and uses a facilities checklist to ensure that all aspects of the space are clean and safe. A partnership agreement between the program provider and program host clearly states who will handle the cleaning of the space, and these partners are aware of and abide by the agreement. Emergency supplies are accessible and adequately provide what the program needs in possible emergency situations, and all staff members are trained in how to use them. Fire and safety drills are conducted regularly and meet all requirements. Drills occur more frequently than the requirements mandate. The program host's drill procedures incorporate the participants in the program. Staff members and the program host work together to plan and assess the outcomes of the drills. The program space allows staff members to run a variety of activities that use varied spaces and different types of materials and equipment. New activities can almost always be added to the program without concern for space restraints or lack of supplies. There is adequate space, including fields or other open spaces, to offer most sports and other physical games. The activities menu is frequently updated to use new materials and equipment.

## Environment & Climate, Indicator 3

\*Develops, implements, and shares approved safety plans and procedures with staff, families, and host school as applicable.

### Performance Level 1

The program has no formal safety plan. The program has no connection to their program host's safety plan. No plan is posted or reviewed with other staff or participants.

### Performance Level 2

The program has developed a written safety plan, but it is not posted or shared. Staff members are aware of the program host's safety plan, but they are not connected to it. Staff members take responsibility for the safety of participants, but are mostly unaware of the official procedures outlined in the plan or other requirements such as reporting of "violent incidents" or fire drill protocols.

### Performance Level 3

The program has developed a written safety plan. The program has connected the program host's safety plans to the needs of the program, and the host's plan contains provisions for the program. The safety plan is posted throughout the program space and is pointed out to participants, staff, and families. Staff members are aware of the procedures and know what to do in case of an emergency, and they know what the official procedures and incident reporting requirements are.

### Performance Level 4

The program has developed a written safety plan, which is updated annually. The program has made a connection to the host's safety planning committee and plays a role in that committee. The safety plan is posted throughout the program space, sent to each participants' home, and discussed with participants, staff, and families. Staff members are trained on safety procedures and incident reporting requirements during their orientation, and they are prepared to handle an emergency.

## Environment & Climate, Indicator 4

\*Provides effective supervision of participants by an approved adult at all times.

### Performance Level 1

No security is provided for the program, and staff members do not monitor or greet external guests. Participants are usually supervised by an adult, but occasionally are left unsupervised for short periods of time. While staff members are supposed to be supervising participants, they are often distracted talking to other staff members, individual participants, or on their phone or a computer.

### Performance Level 2

Staff members are responsible for monitoring the safety of program participants and monitoring external guests, but do not have sufficient training to do so. Participants are always supervised by an adult, but occasionally the adult is a family or community member who does not work for the program. Staff members are occasionally distracted while supervising participants, but generally are fully aware of all participants for whom they are responsible.

### Performance Level 3

During staff orientation, staff members are taught how to ensure the security of the program, including keeping participants safe and monitoring external guests. Participants are always supervised by an approved adult according to all applicable regulations and program policies. Staff members are fully engaged while supervising participants and are always aware of all participants for whom they are responsible.

**Performance Level 4**

During staff orientation, staff members are taught how to ensure the security of the program, including keeping participants safe and monitoring external guests. Participants are always supervised by multiple, approved adults, in accordance with all applicable regulations and program policies. Staff members are fully engaged while supervising participants and are always aware of all participants for whom they are responsible.

**Environment & Climate, Indicator 5**

\*Develops and manages effective arrival and dismissal procedures and plans for safe travel home.

**Performance Level 1**

There is no formal procedure for arrival and dismissal. Staff members do not track participants' arrival to and departure from the program. Staff members sometimes leave the site before all the participants have left. Staff members are unaware of how participants' transportation needs are met.

**Performance Level 2**

Most staff members follow an informal procedure to generally track participants' arrival to and departure from the program. Staff members remain at the site until every participant has left.

**Performance Level 3**

The site director creates and implements a formal set of arrival and dismissal procedures. Staff members are aware of these procedures and check participants in and out each day. Staff members remain at the site until every participant has left, and staff members are mostly aware of how participants travel home.

**Performance Level 4**

The site director creates and implements a formal set of arrival and dismissal procedures in consultation with staff members, participants, and families. Staff members are trained during orientation on these procedures. Staff members check participants in and out each day, and these records are kept with other attendance information. Staff members are aware of participants' transportation arrangements and ensure that every participant begins their travel home safely.

**Environment & Climate, Indicator 6**

\*Provides healthy and nutritious snacks and/or supper.

**Performance Level 1**

Participants may choose to bring their own snack or supper, but food is not provided by the program. Therefore, not every participant has a snack and food is not regulated by staff members.

**Performance Level 2**

A snack or supper is provided on some days. Food options are based on what is readily available with limited selection, and not with consideration of healthy options. Portions may be limited and not meet the needs of all participants.

**Performance Level 3**

A snack or supper is provided daily. Staff members try to have several options available for participants to choose from. Snack and supper offerings are usually healthy and nutritious. Portions are developmentally appropriate and meet the needs of most participants.

**Performance Level 4**

A healthy snack or supper is provided daily. Participants have several options to choose from, and the snack or supper menu is rotated. Special consideration is given to include a variety of nutrients, and to exclude foods that participants are commonly allergic to, such as peanuts. Portions are developmentally appropriate and meet the needs of all participants. The program is aware of its eligibility to participate in food programs that provide reimbursements for snacks and/or suppers following healthy meal patterns, such as the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) or the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), and decides on enrollment in a food program based on the needs of the program and participants.

**EMOTIONAL:****Environment & Climate, Indicator 7**

\* Is aware of, records, and supports staff to address the mental and physical needs of participants in compliance with HIPAA and FERPA.

**Performance Level 1**

The program requires medical forms. No tracking is done to ensure completed records of participants are received. Forms that are submitted are kept on file but rarely used. Therefore, staff members are not always aware of the mental and physical needs of participants.

**Performance Level 2**

The program requires medical forms and tracking is done to ensure all forms are received. Forms are kept on file and are reviewed if there is a medical concern or emergency in compliance with HIPAA. No review of forms is done to make the staff aware of mental and physical needs. Staff members may only become aware of the issue during an emergency that prompts them to review a participant's form.

**Performance Level 3**

The program requires medical forms and receives them from each participant. Forms are reviewed by staff members and special health needs are flagged; forms are then kept on file in compliance with HIPAA. Staff members are informed of relevant mental and physical needs of participants, such as food allergies, at the beginning of each year in compliance with HIPAA. Adjustments are made to the program design as necessary based on participants' diverse abilities. Any information shared with staff members is done so in consideration of HIPAA.

**Performance Level 4**

The program requires medical forms and receives them from each participant. Forms are reviewed by staff members and by a nurse or health specialist and diverse abilities are flagged; forms are then kept on file in compliance with HIPAA. Staff members are informed of relevant mental and physical needs of participants, such as food allergies, at the beginning of each year, and again in the middle of the year in compliance with HIPAA. Adjustments are made to the program design as necessary based on participants' diverse abilities. The site director or other staff members maintain relationships with school nurses to receive updates on participants' mental and physical needs as they change, in compliance with HIPAA and FERPA. Any information shared with staff members is done so in consideration of HIPAA and FERPA.

## Environment & Climate, Indicator 8

Establishes, maintains, and communicates a respectful, inclusive code of conduct with staff, participants, and their families.

### Performance Level 1

No code of conduct is created. Therefore, participants do not know what is expected of their behavior, and staff members make discipline decisions on a case-by-case basis. Families are unaware of what program staff members communicate to their participants about behavior.

### Performance Level 2

A code of conduct is created by staff members, but some expectations may not be respectful and inclusive of all participants and staff members. Most participants are aware of the expectations in the code of conduct. Families are informed about the code of conduct if they are contacted about their child's behavior.

### Performance Level 3

A code of conduct is jointly created by participants and staff members and is designed to be respectful and inclusive of all participants and staff members. All participants are aware of the code of conduct and are encouraged to follow it. The code of conduct is displayed in program spaces. Families are informed about the code of conduct at family events and if they are contacted about their child's behavior.

### Performance Level 4

A code of conduct is jointly created by participants, staff members, and families and designed to be respectful and inclusive of all participants and staff members. All participants agree to and sign the code of conduct. The code of conduct is displayed in program spaces, and a copy of it is sent to each participant's home.

## Environment & Climate, Indicator 9

Applies an approach to behavior management that includes positive reinforcement and intentional social-emotional skill-building.

### Performance Level 1

There is no system for influencing participants' behavior. Each staff member addresses behavior in their own way. Behavioral issues are not recorded in participant records. There is no code of conduct or values statement to guide behavior of children and youth. Social-emotional skill building is not an explicit part of any programming.

### Performance Level 2

Staff members are asked to reward and apply consequences to participants based on their behavior, but they do so inconsistently. Behavioral issues are not recorded in participant records. The program has a code of conduct or values statement, but there is little connection between the statement and staff encouragement of positive behavior. The program occasionally conducts activities focused on social-emotional skill building.

### Performance Level 3

Staff members are asked to encourage participants based on their positive behaviors. The staff members have a set of expectations for participants, which are communicated to participants. Staff members base their encouragement and redirection on these expectations. Behavioral issues are recorded in participant records. The program has a code of conduct or values statement, and it is frequently referenced in reinforcing positive behaviors. Program consistently offers activities focused on social-emotional skill building.

**Performance Level 4**

Staff members are asked to encourage participants based on their positive behaviors. The program has a code of conduct written by staff members, participants, and families. It defines positive behaviors and behaviors in need of improvement. Behavioral issues are recorded, and the information is used to track participant progress over time. The program has a code of conduct, and it is frequently and consistently referenced. The code of conduct is clearly used to assure consistent encouragement and reinforcement. The program consistently offers activities focused on social-emotional skill building, and reinforces those skills across all programming and interactions.

**Environment & Climate, Indicator 10**

Intentionally plans for, welcomes, and creates an environment that actively supports participants with diverse abilities.

**Performance Level 1**

The program does not intentionally plan for participants with diverse abilities. Families of participants with diverse abilities are often directed to other programs where they can be accommodated.

**Performance Level 2**

The program does not intentionally plan for participants with diverse abilities, but welcomes them into the program if they seek to enroll. Accommodations are made for physical accessibility in the program space so participants with diverse physical abilities can attend the program. Participants with diverse abilities are able to participate in some, but not all, activities and events.

**Performance Level 3**

The program intentionally plans for participants with diverse abilities and welcomes them into the program. Accommodations are made for physical accessibility in the program space so participants with diverse physical abilities can attend the program. Accommodations are also made so that participants with psychological, learning, and other disabilities are fully included in the program. Participants with diverse abilities are able to participate in almost all activities and events.

**Performance Level 4**

The program intentionally plans for participants with diverse abilities and welcomes them into the program. The program was designed to be accessible to participants of all levels of ability, and program leaders continuously update the program to ensure full accessibility. Accommodations are made for physical accessibility in the program space so participants with diverse physical abilities can attend the program. Accommodations are also made so that participants with all diverse abilities are fully included in the program. Participants with diverse abilities are able to participate in all activities and events.

**Environment & Climate, Indicator 11**

Embraces dignity for all participants, fosters a sense of belonging, and promotes physical and emotional safety through a culture of support, inclusion services, and mutual respect.

**Performance Level 1**

The program does not explicitly promote physical and emotional safety. Some of the staff is supportive, inclusive, and respectful, but these characteristics are unique to individual staff members. Therefore, not every participant feels completely comfortable in the program.

**Performance Level 2**

The program promotes physical and emotional safety in its mission and/or vision statements. The staff is asked to be supportive, inclusive, and respectful, but not all staff members prioritize these attitudes in their work. Program leaders do

not have enough time to work with all staff members to build the skills and knowledge needed to create a culture of physical and emotional safety. Therefore, not every participant feels completely comfortable in the program.

**Performance Level 3**

The program promotes physical and emotional safety in its mission and/or vision statements. Staff orientation includes a discussion of what it means to be supportive, inclusive, and respectful of all participants. Program leaders include a review of these characteristics in staff assessments, and regularly provide feedback to staff. Some participants are surveyed to get feedback about how comfortable they feel in the program.

**Performance Level 4**

The program promotes physical and emotional safety in its mission and/or vision statements, as well as in other places (e.g. brochures, web pages, etc.). Staff orientation includes a discussion of what it means to be supportive, inclusive, and respectful of all participants. Follow-up professional development sessions cover these topics throughout the year. Program leaders include a review of these characteristics in staff assessments, and provide feedback to staff in an ongoing manner. All participants are surveyed to get feedback about how comfortable they feel in the program.



# ELEMENT 2

## Administration & Organization

A quality program has well-developed systems and sound fiscal management to support and enhance programming and activities for all participants.

**Note:** Some of the administrative indicators below are measured by a checklist rather than on a scale of 1-4. For these indicators, check off those that your program has in place, and leave blank those that are still in need of completion.

### A QUALITY PROGRAM:

- a. \*Maintains all required documents (e.g., permits, security clearances, insurance, etc.) where applicable.
- b. \*Has complete and current enrollment/registration documents for all participants.
- c. \*Maintains accurate and accessible medical records on participants that are shared on a need-to-know basis and in compliance with HIPAA regulations.
- d. \*Completes all required reports and submits them in a timely manner.
- e. \*Has site director and staff who comply with state training regulations where applicable.
- f. \*Maintains staff-to-participant ratio as per state regulations when applicable.
- g. \*Conducts all required fire/safety drills.
- h. \*Communicates about policies and expectations, including attendance, with parents.
- i. \*Creates, consistently uses, and updates an employee handbook that clarifies internal policies and procedures, including a clear salary structure for program staff.
- j. \*Has a clear policy for inclusion of all youth, including those with diverse abilities.

1. \*Establishes and maintains a centralized database of participant and program information, including participant attendance data, which is regularly updated and monitored.
2. \*Documents where participants are during program hours, including arrival and dismissal.
3. \*Provides adequate security for the program.
4. \*Has approved budget; reviews and adjusts budget periodically.
5. Negotiates optimal use of school, community-based organization, and community resources to best meet the needs of participants and their families.
6. Builds trust and transparency for all participants, families, and staff through clearly communicated policies and procedures for data sharing.

PERFORMANCE LEVEL				PLAN TO IMPROVE		
1	2	3	4	RIGHT NOW	THIS YEAR	NEXT YEAR

NOTES:

# Administration & Organization

A quality program has well-developed systems and sound fiscal management to support and enhance programming and activities for all participants.

A quality program has a clear mission statement and set of goals. It has well-defined policies and procedures, which are documented in a handbook. The organization complies with mandates from government agencies and other funders. Records are well-maintained, and licenses are up-to-date.

## CHECKLIST:

- ✓ Maintains all required documents (e.g., permits, security clearances, insurance, etc.) where applicable.
- ✓ Has complete and current enrollment/registration documents for all participants.
- ✓ Maintains accurate and accessible medical records on participants that are shared on a need-to-know basis and in compliance with HIPAA regulations.
- ✓ Completes all required reports and submits them in a timely manner.
- ✓ Has site director and staff who comply with state training regulations where applicable.
- ✓ Maintains staff-to-participant ratio as per state regulations when applicable.
- ✓ Conducts all required fire/safety drills.
- ✓ Communicates about policies and expectations, including attendance, with parents.
- ✓ Creates, consistently uses, and updates an employee handbook that clarifies internal policies and procedures, including a clear salary structure for program staff.
- ✓ Has a clear policy for inclusion of all youth, including those with diverse abilities.

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## Administration & Organization, Indicator 1

\*Establishes and maintains a centralized database of participant and program information, including participant attendance data, which is regularly updated and monitored.

### Performance Level 1

The program does not have a database for tracking participants' information, such as attendance records or emergency contact numbers. Attendance and other data is missing or is maintained by hand.

### Performance Level 2

The program has a database for tracking participants' information. The database is not maintained; information is often outdated or incorrect. Some participants' information does not appear in the database. The site director is the only staff member with access to the information.

### Performance Level 3

The program has a database for tracking participants' information. The database is regularly maintained; information is generally updated and correct. Information appears in the database for all participants. The site director is the primary database user, but other staff members can access the information.

**Performance Level 4**

The program has a database for tracking participants' information. The database is maintained at least weekly; information is generally updated and correct. All information for each participant appears in the database. In addition to standard information, the database includes sections for notes on participant behavior, progress, health, and diverse abilities. The site director is the primary database user, but other staff members can access the information and are encouraged to do so in order to ensure that as much information as possible is stored about each participant. Site director analyzes this data to look for patterns that affect recruitment, marketing, and decision making for the program/organization.

**Administration & Organization, Indicator 2**

\*Documents where participants are during program hours, including arrival and dismissal.

**Performance Level 1**

The program does not document where participants are during program hours. Staff members cannot easily locate participants, making it difficult for family members, health staff, or others to find them.

**Performance Level 2**

The program uses a sign-up form for activities during program hours in addition to sign in at program arrival and sign out at dismissal. When participants change activities, the activity sign-up lists are not updated. Staff members can generally locate participants when activity sign-up lists are accurate.

**Performance Level 3**

The program documents where participants are during program hours by having staff members take attendance for each activity in addition to sign in at program arrival and sign out at dismissal. The site director collects the attendance logs and keeps them on file. Staff members can always locate participants when necessary. Staff follow up to find out why children are not present (on vacation, still in classroom, excused for illness, etc.).

**Performance Level 4**

The program documents where participants are during program hours by having staff members take attendance for each activity in addition to sign in at program arrival and sign out at dismissal. The site director collects the attendance logs, reviews them to determine which activities participants attend most, and uses the information to make adjustments to the program. Staff members can always locate participants when necessary. Staff follow up to find out why children are not present (on vacation, still in classroom, excused for illness, etc.).

**Administration & Organization, Indicator 3**

\*Provides adequate security for the program.

**Performance Level 1**

No security is provided for the program. The program has no formal connection to the program host's security. Participants are usually supervised by an adult, but occasionally are left unsupervised for short periods of time.

**Performance Level 2**

Security is informally handled by staff members. Staff members monitor the safety of program participants and monitor external guests. The program host's security does not assist with visitors. Participants are always supervised by an adult, but occasionally the adult is a family or community member who does not work for the program.

**Performance Level 3**

The program employs a security guard during program hours. During staff orientation, staff members are taught how to ensure the security of the program, including keeping participants safe and monitoring external guests. The program is formally included in the program host's security efforts (e.g., safety agents patrol the halls during and after the program). Participants are always supervised by an approved adult according to all applicable regulations and program policies. Program staff are aware of and participate in lockdown plans for their buildings (which may include other partners) and other safety protocols and procedures.

**Performance Level 4**

The program employs a security guard during program hours. During staff orientation, staff members are taught how to ensure the security of the program, including keeping participants safe and monitoring external guests. A security plan was developed by staff members, the security guard, participants, families, and others that addresses what to do in the case of different emergencies. The program host seamlessly incorporates the program into all its security procedures. Participants are always supervised by multiple approved adults according to all applicable regulations and program policies. Program staff help develop and participate in lockdown plans for their buildings (which may include other partners) and other safety protocols and procedures.

**Administration & Organization, Indicator 4**

\*Has approved budget; reviews and adjusts budget periodically.

**Performance Level 1**

The site director does not track expenses and revenues, and does not have access to budget information. The organization's fiscal staff does this independently, and other staff members and stakeholders never review this financial information. No system of accountability exists related to budget issues.

**Performance Level 2**

The site director tracks expenses and revenues using a budget template. The budget is updated once or twice each year. The budget is approved by the program's oversight body (i.e. Board of Directors, school administrators, etc.) once in the beginning of the year. However, staff members and stakeholders never review the budget and not aware of where to find expense records.

**Performance Level 3**

The site director tracks expenses and revenues using a budget template and records all accounts payable. Records are kept in a book or electronic spreadsheet or system. The budget is updated quarterly. The budget is approved by the program's oversight body (i.e. Board of Directors, school administrators, etc.) once in the beginning of the year, and again at a mid-year point. The site director reviews the budget with other staff members and stakeholders. Staff members are aware of where the records are kept.

**Performance Level 4**

The site director tracks expenses and revenues using a budget template. The site director records all accounts payable and ensures that another staff member checks his or her records to confirm that expenses were tracked correctly. The budget is updated at least monthly, and includes updated expense and revenue projections. The budget is approved by the program's oversight body (i.e. Board of Directors, school administrators, etc.) once in the beginning of the year, and again at a mid-year point. The site director reviews the budget with other staff members and stakeholders, and points out line items that directly affect staff decisions about the program such as the supplies budget. All staff members know where to find records in case an inquiry is made. Records are kept in both a book and an electronic spreadsheet or system.

## Administration & Organization, Indicator 5

Negotiates optimal use of school, community-based organization, and community resources to best meet the needs of participants and their families.

### Performance Level 1

Staff members do not have established relationships with schools, community-based organizations, and other community organizations. Therefore, resources from other organizations are rarely shared with participants and their families. Staff members do not receive support from the staff at other organizations. Program activities are often moved to different spaces or lose access to shared equipment by the program host with no prior discussion or approval.

### Performance Level 2

Staff members have some informal relationships with schools, community-based organizations, and other community organizations. These relationships are mostly based on the site director's personal contacts. Resources from other organizations are shared with participants and their families occasionally, but not consistently, when staff members are aware of them. Staff members receive little support from the staff at other organizations.

### Performance Level 3

Staff members have relationships with several local schools, community-based organizations, and other community organizations. Several staff members maintain these relationships; relationships are not lost during staff transitions. Resources from other organizations are shared with participants and their families regularly. Staff members receive support from the staff at other organizations. The program and other organizations share human resources such as specialist teachers, security guards, or nurses.

### Performance Level 4

Staff members have relationships with most local schools, community-based organizations, and other community organizations. Several staff members maintain these relationships; relationships are not lost during staff transitions. Many of these relationships have established partnership agreements that outline how the relationship will benefit the program. Resources from other organizations are shared with participants and their families regularly. Staff members receive support from the staff at other organizations through partnerships. The program and other organizations share human resources such as specialist teachers, security guards, or nurses, and the program utilizes community volunteers to serve as tutors, mentors, and group leaders.

## Administration & Organization, Indicator 6

Builds trust and transparency for all participants, families, and staff through clearly communicated policies and procedures for data sharing.

### Performance Level 1

Staff and families are unclear about policies and procedures for data sharing. Policies are implied. Families are unaware of what data the staff collects. Written staff and/or parent handbooks do not exist. The program does not have parent conferences or daily check-ins with parents or participants.

### Performance Level 2

Staff and families are unclear about policies and procedures for data sharing. There are written parent/staff handbooks that include a section on data sharing. Informal daily check-ins with participants occur. Staff check in with parents infrequently. Parent conferences are available upon request.

**Performance Level 3**

Staff receive a manual at orientation and parents receive a handbook at enrollment. These clearly outline the program's policies and procedures for data sharing and are updated as needed. Staff check in with parents frequently and have a daily check-in with participants. Parent conferences are available on request, and formal conferences occur once per year.

**Performance Level 4**

Staff check in with parents and participants daily. Families receive a handbook upon enrollment and sign after reviewing the handbook. Staff and family handbooks are updated annually. Policies are developed collaboratively with participants and families. Participants and families are involved in interpreting data. Staff and family handbooks clearly outline how data will be collected and incorporated into the program, such as the use of grades and test scores. Parent conferences are offered at least twice per year and are also available upon request.



# ELEMENT 3

## Relationships

*A quality program develops, nurtures, and maintains positive relationships and interactions among staff, participants, families, and communities.*

### A QUALITY PROGRAM:

1. \*Has staff that respect and communicate with one another and are role models of positive adult relationships.
2. \*Interacts with families in a comfortable, culturally sensitive, and welcoming way.
3. \*Treats participants with respect, listens to what they say, and has structures in place to encourage participant/adult relationships.
4. Encourages and supports participants to interact with one another in positive ways and builds a sense of community among participants.
5. \*Is sensitive to and embraces the diversity of the cultures and languages of participants.
6. Schedules meetings with major stakeholders, including staff, participants, families, and others as appropriate.
7. Encourages and supports former participants to become mentors, volunteers, or staff.
8. \*Is sensitive to and embraces the diversity of gender expression/ identity and sexual orientation.

PERFORMANCE LEVEL				PLAN TO IMPROVE		
1	2	3	4	RIGHT NOW	THIS YEAR	NEXT YEAR

NOTES:

# Relationships

A quality program develops, nurtures, and maintains positive relationships and interactions among staff, participants, families, and communities.

A quality program fosters relationships by developing them intentionally and carefully. Relationships build a positive foundation for healthy social and emotional development. To create quality relationships, staff model cooperation and respect toward youth and other staff, use positive language that supports young people's growth and potential, interact with youth on a one-on-one basis, and organize activities that promote positive communication. The program also builds relationships with external stakeholders that promote positive communication and collaboration.

## Relationships, Indicator 1

\*Has staff that respect and communicate with one another and are role models of positive adult relationships.

### Performance Level 1

Staff members are disrespectful and/or hostile toward one another. Participants witness disrespectful behavior among staff members. Staff members work in isolation, not as a team. The site director does not facilitate relationship-building among staff members. Participants are not taught to develop and maintain positive relationships, nor are these skills modeled by staff members.

### Performance Level 2

Staff members seem to be indifferent to one another. The staff rarely works as a team, and staff members do not take initiative to work together to best serve participants. The site director mediates for staff members when approached regarding a disagreement, but does not take other steps to facilitate relationship-building among staff members. Participants are not taught and seldom see modeling of relationship-building skills by staff.

### Performance Level 3

Staff members generally seem to work collaboratively and are respectful of one another. The staff works as a team in order to best serve participants. The site director mediates for staff members when approached regarding a disagreement, and follows-up with staff members to ensure the conflict does not affect their work. The site director facilitates relationship-building among staff members by organizing professional development on relationship-building and providing non-work related functions, such as a staff picnic, for staff to bond and develop as a team.

### Performance Level 4

Staff members work collaboratively, positively work through conflicts, and are respectful of one another. Staff members work as a team and develop strategies for utilizing each others' skills to best serve participants. The site director provides conflict resolution, negotiation, and professional development for the staff with direct examples of how to implement techniques. When staff members need additional assistance, and cannot resolve conflicts on their own, the site director immediately mediates for them. The site director follows-up with staff members several times to ensure the conflict does not affect their work and that they feel that it is resolved. The site director also convenes a staff committee to plan relationship-building and team-building opportunities for staff members, including occasional events, a mentoring program for new staff members, and monthly staff meetings.

## Relationships, Indicator 2

\*Interacts with families in a comfortable, culturally sensitive, and welcoming way.

### Performance Level 1

There is little interaction between families and staff members. Staff members do not welcome families at the program site; they are told to come to the site only when it is time to pick up their child. Family members' concerns are often dismissed. Family members who are not native-English speakers are not given an opportunity to talk to staff members in their own language.

### Performance Level 2

There is some interaction between families and staff members. Staff members welcome families who come to the program site, but they do not specifically invite them to visit other than when it is time to pick up their child. Family members may voice concerns, but action is seldom taken. Family members who are not native-English speakers are only given an opportunity to talk to staff members in their own language when there happens to be a staff member who understands their language or when there is a problem with their child.

### Performance Level 3

There is frequent interaction between families and staff members. Staff members welcome families, and specifically ask them to come to the program site once a year to learn more about the program and to see their child engaged in activities. Family members' concerns are taken into consideration whenever possible. The site director hires staff members who are bilingual whenever possible, so that family members who are not native-English speakers can talk to staff members and so they can develop program materials in multiple languages. Staff have some knowledge and awareness of other cultures and are accepting of differences.

### Performance Level 4

There is frequent, regular interaction between families and staff members. Families are regularly made aware that they are always welcome at the program site to see their child engaged in activities and to participate in family activities and programs. Family members' suggestions, ideas, and concerns are welcomed, requested, documented, and implemented whenever it is possible. The site director hires staff members who are bilingual whenever possible so family members who are not native-English speakers can talk to staff members in their own language. If a family member speaks a language not spoken by any staff member, the site director locates a translator to facilitate dialogue. Staff have knowledge and awareness of and are accepting of other cultures.

## Relationships, Indicator 3

\*Treats participants with respect, listens to what they say, and has structures in place to encourage participant/adult relationships.

### Performance Level 1

Staff members are often disrespectful to participants and have been observed yelling at participants to get their attention. Staff members frequently interrupt participants who are speaking. Staff members choose to use negative language and negative discipline strategies rather than teaching, supporting, and praising positive behaviors. Staff members do not call participants by name. Participants' ideas are not taken seriously or are dismissed. The program culture and activities are adult-centered.

### Performance Level 2

Staff members are not disrespectful, but often multi-task while working with participants and do not often make eye contact or individual connections with participants. Staff members seldom call participants by name. There are few opportunities for participants to communicate with staff members and peers about the program, daily experiences, and concerns. The program culture and activities are adult-centered.

**Performance Level 3**

A daily check-in is incorporated into the program routine as a tool to connect participants with staff members and provide opportunities for staff to get to know all participants. Staff members often call participants by name. Program structures support participants in contributing to program offerings and to the program's discipline policies or code of conduct. Participants are valued, trained, supported, and regularly recognized as leaders within the program. A majority of staff members practice a variety of positive discipline techniques and use community-building strategies. Staff members try to make time to connect with participants on an individual basis. The program culture and activities are youth-centered.

**Performance Level 4**

Staff members are aware of the strengths and needs of individual participants; a daily check-in is incorporated into the program routine. Positive supports and discipline strategies are used throughout the program. Participants contribute to program offerings and to the program's discipline policies or code of conduct through formal structures, such as advisory boards or youth boards. Most activities are designed with participant input, and participant feedback is sought and integrated into the program. The program culture is safe and confidential, which encourages participants to speak freely. Participants are valued, trained, supported, and regularly recognized as leaders within the program. The language and behavior of staff members shows sensitivity to race, ethnicity, sex, gender identification, sexual orientation, and the physical and intellectual ability of all participants. Staff members have adequate professional development to teach, model, and support cooperation and respect among participants. Many participants and staff intentionally develop strong relationships, and they are documented in program records and included in the program's evaluation. Staff members recognize this as a core part of their work. All participants have at least one strong relationship with a staff member.

**Relationships, Indicator 4**

Encourages and supports participants to interact with one another in positive ways and builds a sense of community among participants.

**Performance Level 1**

Participants do not know one another and are disrespectful; this is evidenced by bullying and teasing. Staff members primarily focus on the program and do not address the social and emotional development of participants. Staff members do not intervene in bullying and teasing or treat it as an opportunity for conflict resolution. Participants are sometimes reprimanded for disrespectful behavior, but only when staff members have time to address the issue. No opportunities exist for participants to become peer leaders and interact positively with other participants. The program does not consider community-building as a program objective, and therefore does not focus any resources or time on it.

**Performance Level 2**

Some participants know each other and there is no program-wide sense of community. Participants are sometimes disrespectful to one another, and there are some signs of bullying and teasing. Staff members seldom intervene in bullying and teasing situations and have no formal training in effective interventions. Staff members focus primarily on running activities and only address the social and emotional development of participants if they have time. Staff members have no formal training in social and emotional learning or how to teach conflict resolution skills to participants. Participants are usually reprimanded for disrespectful behavior. Participants are not valued as role models for positive interaction. The program is interested in building a community among participants, but does not intentionally focus resources or time on it.

**Performance Level 3**

Positive program expectations are developed by participants and staff members at the beginning of each year and taught, modeled, reinforced, and supported throughout the year. Participants are generally respectful to one another. Staff members receive professional development in social and emotional learning and focus both on running activities and on social and

emotional development. Bullying and teasing are addressed immediately and tracked to ensure that they have stopped. Positive relationships are built and fostered through a variety of strategies including team-building exercises. There is a sense of community and participants know almost everyone. Participants are always taught, prompted, and encouraged to display respectful behavior, and are reminded, redirected, and/or reprimanded for disrespectful behavior. The program considers building a community among participants to be a program objective, and staff members are expected to focus resources and time working toward this goal.

#### **Performance Level 4**

Participants know all of their peers, and building a community among participants is a main program objective. Positive program expectations are developed by participants, families, and staff members at the beginning of each year, and they are taught, modeled, reinforced, supported, and assessed throughout the year. Participants are respectful of one another and acknowledged regularly for respectful behavior. Staff members receive professional development in social and emotional learning, with an emphasis on effective bullying prevention education and interventions. They apply their knowledge when running activities, social and emotional development, and community building. Participants are taught empathy, respect, and what bullying and teasing are and that they are not tolerated at the program. Bullying and teasing are addressed, immediately investigated, dealt with, and tracked to ensure that they have stopped. Positive relationships are built and fostered through a variety of strategies, including team-building exercises. Participants are always taught, prompted, encouraged, and recognized for respectful behavior, and are reminded, redirected, and/or reprimanded for disrespectful behavior. Collaborative projects and service learning opportunities are an integral part of programming.

### **Relationships, Indicator 5**

\* Is sensitive to and embraces the diversity of the cultures and languages of participants.

#### **Performance Level 1**

Staff members are unaware of participants' cultures. They only speak English and do not communicate with participants who are English language learners. Staff members question cultural norms that participants follow, such as wearing a covering, eating certain food, or other behaviors, and participants often have to defend these behaviors.

#### **Performance Level 2**

Staff members are sometimes aware of participants' cultures. Most staff members only speak English and do not regularly communicate with participants who are English language learners, but they try to find someone who can assist with translation when possible. Staff members generally disregard cultural norms that participants follow, such as wearing a covering, eating certain food, or other behaviors, and often have to be reminded of them.

#### **Performance Level 3**

Staff members are aware of and respect participants' cultures. Several staff members are bilingual and work with participants who are English language learners to ensure that they are engaged in the program. Staff members generally understand cultural norms that participants follow, such as wearing a covering, eating certain food, or other behaviors, and are accepting of them.

#### **Performance Level 4**

Staff members are aware of participants' cultures, and are mandated to attend trainings on cultural sensitivity. The site director seeks out bilingual staff members, ensuring that the staff would be able to speak all of the most common languages spoken in the community. Staff members work with participants who are English language learners to ensure that they are engaged in the program. Staff members generally understand cultural norms that participants follow, and ask questions to learn more to ensure that they are respectful of the participants, families, and cultures. The program is designed in collaboration with the community and with a goal to celebrate the cultures in the community. The program exposes

participants to a variety of cultures in positive ways, so every participant feels welcome and accepted, and accepts and appreciates other cultures.

## Relationships, Indicator 6

Schedules meetings with major stakeholders, including staff, participants, families, and others as appropriate.

### Performance Level 1

Staff members do not regularly meet with other stakeholders. Information is shared with stakeholders via e-mail or phone calls only, infrequently or only when necessary. When meetings are held with stakeholders, they generally focus on troubleshooting or addressing rising challenges.

### Performance Level 2

Staff members have a few meetings with the program's major stakeholders, including the Board of Directors, local principals, funders, families, participants, and others, but they are often called last minute rather than scheduled in advance. Meetings are scheduled only when necessary. These meetings generally focus on troubleshooting or addressing rising challenges.

### Performance Level 3

Staff members have scheduled meetings with the program's major stakeholders, including the Board of Directors, local principals, funders, families, participants, and others. Meetings are scheduled in advance and occur on a regular basis. These meetings give staff members the opportunity to discuss program updates, ask for input and suggestions, troubleshoot, address rising challenges, and celebrate successes.

### Performance Level 4

The program has scheduled meetings, such as Advisory Board meetings, with its major stakeholders, including the Board of Directors, local principals, funders, families, participants, and others. Meetings are scheduled in advance and occur on a regular basis. Stakeholders are invited to contribute to meeting agendas to include their information, ideas, suggestions, concerns, and feedback on the program. Meetings give staff members and stakeholders the opportunity to discuss program updates, complete quality self-assessments, plan and revise programming and program direction, identify strengths, troubleshoot, address rising challenges, plan for sustainability, assess progress towards goals, and celebrate successes.

## Relationships, Indicator 7

Encourages and supports former participants to become mentors, volunteers, or staff.

### Performance Level 1

The program does not maintain contact with former participants when they stop attending or become too old to attend the program. Former participants rarely contribute to the program.

### Performance Level 2

The program maintains contact with some former participants who stay in touch with individual staff members. Depending on the staff member they remain in touch with, they are sometimes asked to contribute to the program in whatever way they can. These contributions are usually made through occasional visits to the program.

### Performance Level 3

The program tries to maintain contact with former participants by keeping their contact information in a database and contacting them once or twice a year. Former participants are asked to update their information if it changes. The program

sends news and updates to former participants including job openings in the program. Former participants are invited to contribute to the program by working directly with participants as a mentor or volunteer, or by participating in fundraisers and events.

#### **Performance Level 4**

The program maintains regular contact with former participants by keeping their contact information up-to-date in a database. Former participants are asked to update their information if it changes, and they are contacted annually as a reminder. The program sends news and updates to former participants on a regular basis. Former participants are invited to contribute to the program by volunteering a set number of hours to work with participants, serve as a mentor, attend or speak at events, or participate in fundraisers. Requests are sent to adult former participants who may have special skills, such as grant writing, event management, or marketing. Former participants are intentionally recruited for job openings because of their direct experience with the program.

### **Relationships, Indicator 8**

\*Is sensitive to and embraces the diversity of gender expression/ identity and sexual orientation.

#### **Performance Level 1**

Participants are bullied by other participants and/or by staff around issues of gender expression/identity and sexual orientation. Staff members do not address bullying that occurs.

#### **Performance Level 2**

Participants are sometimes bullied around issues of gender expression/identity and sexual orientation, but staff intervene and participants feel able to come to staff for help.

#### **Performance Level 3**

Participants are not actively bullied around issues of gender expression/identity and sexual orientation, and they feel comfortable coming to staff with issues. There is no active work on the part of staff to encourage acceptance of all.

#### **Performance Level 4**

Participants feel comfortable to express their gender expression/identity and sexual orientation without fear of social repercussions. Staff actively teach understanding and acceptance of diversity in gender expression/identity and sexual orientation.



# ELEMENT 4

## Staffing & Professional Development

*A quality program recruits, hires, and develops diverse staff members who understand, value, and promote high-quality practices.*

### A QUALITY PROGRAM:

#### Ongoing Professional Development

1. \*Is committed to professional development and a culture of learning, as evidenced by the director and staff attending training and facilitating post-training group reflection as part of a continuous improvement system.
2. Provides opportunities for professional growth and meaningful skill development through the provision of supports such as training, coaching, mentoring, and peer learning.
3. Develops and supports staff to plan suitable activities that correspond to the developmental needs of participants, including participants with diverse abilities and English language learners.
4. Works with staff to achieve credentialing and accreditation where available.
5. Where appropriate, develops and supports staff to provide educational opportunities for and work with adult learners, including peer staff members and/or participants' family members.

#### Hiring/Onboarding Staff

6. \*Recruits, hires, and develops staff who reflect the diversity and culture(s) of the community.
7. \*Implements a standard orientation including organization/program culture, mission and goals, handbook, and professional expectations.
8. \*Ensures staff members have competence in instructional strategies and content specific areas where appropriate.

#### Programmatic Structure

9. Has leadership who provide appropriate supervision, support, and opportunities for staff feedback and collaboration.
10. Has regular staff meetings that include sharing and reflection.

#### Staff Evaluation

11. Uses a transparent method for assessing staff performance.
12. Engages staff in continuous improvement based on evaluation results and stakeholder feedback.

PERFORMANCE LEVEL				PLAN TO IMPROVE		
1	2	3	4	RIGHT NOW	THIS YEAR	NEXT YEAR

NOTES:

# Staffing & Professional Development

A quality program recruits, hires, and develops diverse staff members who understand, value, and promote high-quality practices.

A quality program employs staff who are properly equipped with the academic and experiential knowledge needed to fulfill their job requirements. Program leaders have ongoing staff recruitment and development plans to attract and retain high-quality staff. Staff should always have required credentials and licenses and meet mandatory staff-to-participant ratios. Quality programs reach beyond mandatory training requirements to provide staff with additional tools and knowledge. Professional development opportunities are frequent and offer a variety of ways for practitioners to bolster their skills, and ultimately, lead to improved program performance.

## ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

### Staffing & Professional Development, Indicator 1

\*Is committed to professional development and a culture of learning, as evidenced by the director and staff attending training and facilitating post-training group reflection as part of a continuous improvement system.

#### Performance Level 1

The program director does not attend conferences, workshops, or other types of training. The director does not value professional development and does not feel that these types of events are necessary for others to attend. Therefore, the director is not able to bring information from trainings to his/her staff. The director rarely supports staff members to attend professional development events. Staff uses personal, unpaid time to attend professional development.

#### Performance Level 2

The program director attends conferences, workshops, or other types of training occasionally. The program director knows there is value in attending professional development events, but often has other tasks to do that are prioritized over attending these events. The program director often does not have time to share information from trainings with staff. There are limited opportunities and support for staff to attend professional development.

#### Performance Level 3

The program director attends conferences, workshops, or other types of training regularly, based on his/her professional development needs. The program director recognizes the value of professional development by attending and supporting staff to attend relevant professional development. The program director brings information from trainings to his/her staff when appropriate.

#### Performance Level 4

The program director and staff attend conferences, workshops, or other types of training regularly, based on professional development needs. The program director recognizes the value of professional development by attending and supporting staff to attend relevant professional development. The program director brings information from trainings to his/her staff when appropriate. Staff and program director share information from trainings with colleagues. Staff and program director collaboratively select training opportunities that reflect community and programmatic needs.

## Staffing & Professional Development, Indicator 2

Provides opportunities for professional growth and meaningful skill development through the provision of supports such as training, coaching, mentoring, and peer learning.

### Performance Level 1

Staff members are not treated like professionals; they are expected to follow the site director's instructions regarding program activities and operations. Staff members are not encouraged to seek education and training related to their jobs. Staff development opportunities are offered infrequently. Staff members do not feel that they are learning and growing as professionals.

### Performance Level 2

Staff members are occasionally asked for input regarding program activities and operations. Staff development opportunities are offered throughout the year on an irregular schedule. The site director selects training and workshop topics. Staff members sometimes feel they are learning new information, but often do not feel they are growing as professionals. Some staff members are promoted into a limited number of leadership positions as they become available, but most leave the program to find higher-level jobs.

### Performance Level 3

Staff development opportunities are offered regularly throughout the year. The site director selects training and workshop topics with input from individual staff members. Staff members feel they are learning new information and are growing as professionals. The site director works one-on-one with staff members to create individual staff development plans. Staff members are consistently asked for input regarding program activities and operations. Staff members are groomed to take on leadership roles.

### Performance Level 4

There is opportunity for career progression. Staff development opportunities are offered regularly throughout the year. The site director and staff members meet to select training and workshop topics together. Trainings and workshops are sequenced and build upon one another. Staff members feel they are learning new information and are growing as professionals. The site director creates a staff-wide development plan that addresses the needs of the entire staff as well as the needs of individual staff members. Staff members are supported to obtain advanced degrees and the site director promotes learning by holding trainings for staff, distributing information about other educational opportunities, and assisting to secure grants and scholarships to expand access to professional development.

## Staffing & Professional Development, Indicator 3

Develops and supports staff to plan suitable activities that correspond to the developmental needs of participants, including participants with diverse abilities and English language learners.

### Performance Level 1

Staff members are expected to plan suitable activities for participants, but do not receive training in this area. The site director does not monitor activity plans, and does not know if activities correspond to the developmental needs of participants. No professional development plan is offered for staff.

### Performance Level 2

Staff members are expected to plan suitable activities for participants, and have access to printed information about youth

developmental stages. The site director occasionally monitors activity plans, and sometimes talks to staff members if their activities do not correspond to the developmental needs of participants. Limited training on youth development is offered.

### **Performance Level 3**

Staff members are expected to plan suitable activities for participants, and receive printed information about youth developmental stages during staff orientation. Trainings on youth development and activity planning are held throughout the year. The site director always monitors activity plans, and works with staff members who need assistance with running activities that correspond to the developmental needs of participants.

### **Performance Level 4**

Staff members are expected to plan suitable activities for participants, and receive printed information about youth developmental stages during staff orientation. Staff members participate in a series of sequenced trainings prior to the start of the program year. The series of trainings cover youth developmental stages, age appropriate activities, academic learning standards, afterschool curricula use, and lesson planning. The site director always monitors activity plans, and works with staff members who need assistance with running activities that correspond to the developmental needs of participants.

## **Staffing & Professional Development, Indicator 4**

Works with staff to achieve credentialing and accreditation where available.

### **Performance Level 1**

No program support is available for staff members who wish to earn a professional credential. The site director is not aware of accreditation opportunities. No information is shared with staff about credentialing or accreditation.

### **Performance Level 2**

Limited program support is available for staff members who wish to earn a professional credential. The site director tells staff members about the School-Age Care Credential and directs them to more information on how to obtain it. The site director is aware of accreditation opportunities but does not pursue them or discuss them with staff members.

### **Performance Level 3**

The site director encourages staff members to earn a professional credential when applicable, and staff members are directed to information about the School-Age Care Credential. The site director is aware of accreditation opportunities, and discusses them with staff members and other stakeholders to decide if or when it is appropriate to pursue them.

### **Performance Level 4**

The site director encourages staff members to earn a professional credential when applicable, and staff members are directed to information about the School-Age Care Credential. Staff trainings are aligned with a professional credential to assist the staff members pursuing it. The site director is aware of accreditation opportunities, and discusses them with staff members and other stakeholders to decide when it is appropriate to pursue them. The program works toward accreditation under the site director's leadership.

## Staffing & Professional Development, Indicator 5

Where appropriate, develops and supports staff to provide educational opportunities for and work with adult learners, including peer staff members and/or participants' family members.

### Performance Level 1

The program does not develop or support staff to provide educational opportunities for or to work with adult learners.

### Performance Level 2

The program occasionally requires staff to provide educational opportunities for adult learners, including family members and/or community leaders. However, the staff only receives support for working with adult learners on an ad hoc basis, dependent on when events and activities for adults are taking place. Some staff members may not receive support for working with adult learners, though they are sometimes asked to work with adults anyway.

### Performance Level 3

The program occasionally requires staff to provide educational opportunities for adult learners, including family members and/or community leaders. The staff receives support for working with adult learners during staff orientation. Only those staff members who receive training during orientation are asked to lead events and activities for adults.

### Performance Level 4

The program occasionally requires staff to provide educational opportunities for adult learners, including family members and/or community leaders. The staff receives support for working with adult learners during staff orientation, and regularly revisits the topic during professional development opportunities throughout the year. Therefore, all staff members are exposed to adult learning theory concepts and promising practices in working with adults.

## HIRING/ONBOARDING STAFF:

## Staffing & Professional Development, Indicator 6

\*Recruits, hires, and develops staff who reflect the diversity and culture(s) of the community.

### Performance Level 1

Staff members are recruited and hired without consideration of the diversity and cultures of the community.

### Performance Level 2

Staff members are recruited and hired from the community and surrounding areas. Therefore, they tend to reflect the diversity and cultures of the community.

### Performance Level 3

Staff members are recruited and hired with consideration of the diversity and cultures of the community; recruitment efforts target local professionals. The site director develops a staff representing a variety of ages, races, ethnicities, academic backgrounds, etc. Several staff members can speak the native languages spoken by non-English speaking participants and/or families.

### Performance Level 4

Staff members are recruited and hired with careful consideration of the diversity and cultures of the community; recruitment efforts target professionals from local schools and organizations, as well as parents, high school students, and volunteers from the community. The site director develops a staff representing a variety of ages, races, ethnicities, academic backgrounds, etc. Several staff members can speak the native languages spoken by non-English speaking participants and/or families.

## Staffing & Professional Development, Indicator 7

\* Implements a standard orientation including organization/program culture, mission and goals, handbook, and professional expectations.

### Performance Level 1

There is no handbook or training to provide consistent onboarding for new staff. Staff members are not aware of the program's mission and goals or disagree with them.

### Performance Level 2

The program utilizes and distributes a program handbook that outlines organization/program culture, mission and goals, and staff expectations but offers no formal orientation training to ensure consistency and understanding.

### Performance Level 3

The program utilizes and distributes a handbook and has defined practices for onboarding, which includes a training for new staffers inclusive of a youth development framework and positive behavior management protocols. Professional development, supervisor support, and employee performance goals are clearly communicated and linked to the program's mission and goals.

### Performance Level 4

The program provides comprehensive onboarding to staff including providing a handbook, foundational training/orientation, and ongoing capacity building to ensure clear understanding of program's mission, goals, and staff expectations. Staff members are expected to incorporate the mission and goals into their work, through daily performance, planned activities, and communications with participants, families, staff members, and supervisors. Staff members are asked to give feedback on the mission and goals and share related best practices on a regular basis.

## Staffing & Professional Development, Indicator 8

\* Ensures staff members have competence in instructional strategies and content specific areas where appropriate.

### Performance Level 1

Potential staff members are assessed only on academic experience, not additional relevant skills for working with participants. The academic assets of staff members are not used to enhance program offerings. There are limited professional development opportunities for staff to build academic competencies to share with participants.

### Performance Level 2

Potential staff members provide information about their academic and professional experience when hired. The site director utilizes staff strengths and talents to support program development and activities. There are ongoing professional development opportunities for staff to build academic competencies to share with participants.

### Performance Level 3

Potential staff members provide information about their academic and professional experience when hired. The site director utilizes staff strengths and talents to support program development and activities. There are ongoing professional development opportunities for staff to build academic competencies to share with participants. The site director assigns staff members to tasks and activities based on their knowledge and experience. During staff observations and formative evaluations, staff members are given tools to increase competency in content specific areas and core youth development principles.

**Performance Level 4**

Potential staff members provide information about their academic and professional experience when hired. The site director utilizes staff strengths and talents to support program development and activities. There are ongoing professional development opportunities for staff to build academic competencies to share with participants. The site director assigns staff members to tasks and activities based on their knowledge and experience. During staff observations and formative evaluations, staff members are given tools to increase competency in content specific areas and core youth development principals. Experienced staff take on coaching and mentoring roles to build the capacity of colleagues.

**PROGRAMMATIC STRUCTURE:****Staffing & Professional Development, Indicator 9**

Has leadership who provide appropriate supervision, support, and opportunities for staff feedback and collaboration.

**Performance Level 1**

The organization does not have clear expectations for staff performance. Staff members are often reprimanded and are not acknowledged for accomplishments and contributions. Job descriptions are unavailable.

**Performance Level 2**

There is little awareness of expectations. Issues of concern are discussed, but there is no follow through or planned solutions. Written job descriptions exist but are not shared with staff members.

**Performance Level 3**

Staff members are engaged when discussing issues and brainstorming solutions regarding the program. Staff members are familiar with the standards to which they are held. Program leadership is accessible and follow-up happens often. The site director coaches staff members regularly. Staff and leadership demonstrate mutual respect. Written job descriptions are shared with staff members.

**Performance Level 4**

The site director coaches staff members regularly. He/she meets with each staff member to discuss performance and to set individual professional development goals. There is a clear professional development plan for each staff member. Staff members attend trainings regularly and have opportunities to share strategies learned. Staff members seek out trainings that build skills beyond regulatory requirements and basic topics. Supervisory staff members, including the site director, participate in management training to develop skills to support other staff members' work. Interactions between staff members and leadership demonstrate mutual respect. Written job descriptions are shared with staff members.

**Staffing & Professional Development, Indicator 10**

Has regular staff meetings that include sharing and reflection.

**Performance Level 1**

The program does not have regular staff meetings. Staff members must raise concerns or ask questions on an ad hoc basis.

**Performance Level 2**

The program has staff meetings when an issue arises. Staff meetings are led by the site director and all staff members are invited to participate.

**Performance Level 3**

The program has staff meetings on a regular basis. Staff meetings are led by the site director and all staff members are required to participate. Staff members receive advance notice of meetings to ensure their ability to participate.

**Performance Level 4**

The program has staff meetings on a regular basis. Staff meetings are led by the site director and all staff are required to participate. Staff members are asked to contribute to meeting agendas and are encouraged to share their successes and challenges at meetings for discussion. Staff members receive advance notice of meetings to ensure their ability to participate.

**STAFF EVALUATION:****Staffing & Professional Development, Indicator 11**

Uses a transparent method for assessing staff performance.

**Performance Level 1**

The site director occasionally observes staff members' performance and gives them verbal feedback.

**Performance Level 2**

The site director has an internal method for assessing staff performance. The method uses a one-way assessment (i.e. observation) and is implemented irregularly. The site director does not share the information collected with the staff members observed. Sometimes the information is used to inform modifications in program management and operations.

**Performance Level 3**

The site director, with input from staff members, uses an internal method for assessing staff performance. The method uses both one-way assessment (i.e. external observation) and two-way assessment (i.e. self-assessment) and is implemented regularly. The site director shares the information collected with staff members observed. The information is used to inform staff members' goals for the coming year and to collect suggestions to create professional development opportunities.

**Performance Level 4**

The site director, in collaboration with other staff and program stakeholders, uses an internal method for assessing staff performance. The method uses several types of assessment (i.e. observation, self-assessment, etc.) and is implemented regularly. The site director shares the information collected with staff members and asks them to reflect on their own performance. The information is used to inform staff members' goals for the coming year and to collect suggestions to create professional development opportunities. If a staff member receives a negative review, a corrective action plan is developed. All information collected is stored in paper and electronic files to enable the site director to review program progress over time.

**Staffing & Professional Development, Indicator 12**

Engages staff in continuous improvement based on evaluation results and stakeholder feedback.

**Performance Level 1**

The program does not use a distinct set of quality standards, evaluation frameworks, and/or program improvement strategies. Staff members, families, and participants do not have a clear understanding of the program's strengths and challenges.

**Performance Level 2**

The program uses an established set of quality standards, evaluation frameworks, and/or program improvement strategies. Staff members are mostly aware of the program's strengths and challenges, but they are not communicated well to families and participants. Families and participants are unclear of what they can expect from the program and how well it is achieving its goals.

**Performance Level 3**

The program uses an established set of quality standards, evaluation frameworks, and program improvement strategies based on research and evidence-based models. All staff members are aware of program strengths and areas for improvement, and they are regularly communicated to families and participants. Families and participants have a clear understanding of what they can expect from the program and how well it is achieving its goals.

**Performance Level 4**

The program uses an established set of quality standards, evaluation frameworks, and program improvement strategies based on research, evidence-based models, and what has historically been successful in the program and community. All staff members are aware of and believe in the program's philosophy on quality, and families and participants have regular opportunities to learn about it and offer input on what quality means and should look like. Families and participants have a clear understanding of what they can expect from the program and how well it is achieving its goals. Program leaders frequently reference quality standards and promising practices when making decisions about the program.





# Programming & Activities

A quality program provides a well-rounded variety of activities and opportunities that support the physical, social, and cognitive growth and development of all participants.

A quality program provides participants with guidance and emotional support; staff take a genuine interest in participants and their academic, social, physical, and emotional development. Staff use strategies that are geared toward encouraging participants to push beyond their present level of competency. The activities are well-organized and age-appropriate, provide exposure to new ideas, and offer opportunities to learn and build new skills, problem solve, and build community.

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## Programming & Activities, Indicator 1

\*Provides activities that reflect the mission and goals of the program.

### Performance Level 1

Activities are selected based on materials, staff members' interests, and space available. Activities are not sequential and don't build off one another to reach deeper learning goals. Participants do not choose a theme for further exploration.

### Performance Level 2

Activities that reflect the program mission are prioritized. Staff select a programmatic theme to reinforce the mission and some participant enrichment activities are tied to the theme. Some activities are offered that do not reflect the program mission/theme.

### Performance Level 3

The program mission serves as the foundation for all activities selected. Activity and lesson plans include explanations of how the activity supports the program mission. Programmatic themes related to the mission are chosen by participants. Most participant enrichment activities build off the programmatic theme.

### Performance Level 4

The program mission serves as the foundation for all activities developed and selected. Activity and lesson plans include explanations detailing how the activity supports the program mission. Staff members explain the mission to participants and offer rationale and the connectedness of the mission to the program activities. Participants have the opportunity to give feedback on the relationship between the program mission and activities regularly throughout the year. Participants create programmatic themes related to the mission to link enrichment offerings with their interests and creativity.

## Programming & Activities, Indicator 2

Uses a program design and schedule that address the needs of the whole child, including physical, social and emotional, and academic needs of all participants.

### Performance Level 1

The program focuses exclusively on one or two aspects of participants' needs, such as academic or physical. Activities are narrow in scope and not engaging to participants. Activities are not appropriate to support participants' active growth and development. There are some days when participants spend almost all of the time sitting at a desk. Activities rely on worksheets or silent learning with little peer interaction.

**Performance Level 2**

The program includes several aspects of participants' needs but is not designed to fully address all of them. Some participants are disengaged in the program because it does not address their individual needs.

**Performance Level 3**

The program supports youth strengths and needs, including physical, social and emotional, and academic needs. The program is designed in consideration of the whole child and incorporating a variety of sequential activities and teaching styles into the schedule each day. Participants are engaged in the program because it uses differentiated methods and personalized activities that build on their strengths to meet their individual needs.

**Performance Level 4**

Program schedule supports varied opportunities for participants to engage in physical, social and emotional learning, and academic pursuits. The program focuses on all aspects of participants' strengths and needs. The program is designed in consideration of all participants' needs, and always incorporates a variety of sequential activities and teaching styles. Participants are engaged in the program because it is personalized, based on strengths, and uses differentiated methods and activities to meet their individual needs. In addition, activity plans require staff members to indicate how they meet the different needs of participants, and participant assessments assist staff and participants with determining if participant needs are met.

**Programming & Activities, Indicator 3**

\*Features activities that are developmentally appropriate for the age and skill level of the participants and allow participants to develop new skills during the program year.

**Performance Level 1**

Activities are not selected based on the age and skill level of the participants. Participants are not challenged to learn new things. There is little to no evidence that participants develop new skills during the program year.

**Performance Level 2**

Activities are selected with some consideration of the age and skill level of the participants. Staff members demonstrate little knowledge of youth developmental stages. There is some anecdotal evidence that participants develop new skills during the program year.

**Performance Level 3**

Activities are selected based on the age and skill level of the participants. Staff members consider youth developmental stages when planning activities. There is some research-based and anecdotal evidence that participants develop new skills during the program year. Participants can often select from a number of activities that expose them to new concepts and skill-building opportunities.

**Performance Level 4**

Participants are broken into small activity groups so activities can be selected and tailored based on the age and skill level of each participant. Staff members consider youth developmental stages when planning activities and monitor participants' development across stages. There is significant research-based and anecdotal evidence that participants develop new skills during the program year. Participants can always select from a number of activities that expose them to new concepts and skill-building opportunities.

## Programming & Activities, Indicator 4

\*Offers project-based, experiential activities that promote creativity, reflect the interests of participants, and provide opportunities for skill development and application of knowledge.

### Performance Level 1

The program exclusively offers academic activities, such as homework help and math drills, or adult-led activities with little to no experiential learning opportunities for participants.

### Performance Level 2

The program primarily offers academic activities, such as homework help and math drills. Non-academic activities are primarily adult-led with few project-based or experiential learning opportunities for participants. While some creative activities are incorporated into the program, they are offered to only some participants or on an irregular basis.

### Performance Level 3

The program offers academic and experiential learning activities. Both academic and non-academic topics are approached using youth-centered, project-based, and experiential activities. Participants are encouraged to participate in new projects that assist them to build new skills and enhance existing skills. Participants are encouraged to give feedback on projects and activities.

### Performance Level 4

The program offers academic and non-academic, youth-centered, project-based, and experiential activities. Participants help to choose projects and activities, as well as the ways in which they will be offered. Participant assessments and input assist in the development and selection of skills to build, enhance, and maintain. Participants are encouraged to share feedback with staff members regarding how projects and activities built upon and enhanced their strengths and skills and helped them to achieve their goals. Staff members use participant feedback to inform activity planning. Staff members are trained on using teaching methods and youth development strategies that foster engagement, leadership, personal, social, and academic skill development, as well as creativity and self-expression.

## Programming & Activities, Indicator 5

Regularly elicits feedback from participants to determine enrichment offerings.

### Performance Level 1

No attempt is made to involve participants in formal or informal mechanisms to contribute to program design within a given year.

### Performance Level 2

Limited opportunities exist for participants to participate in program design. These opportunities are often informal and not consistent. If feedback is gathered (via surveys, focus groups, etc.) results are not shared with participants, and few changes to enrichment offerings are made.

### Performance Level 3

Program utilizes both formal (surveys, focus groups, youth councils, etc.) and informal conversations to allow participants to shape enrichment offerings. Results are shared with participants, and some changes are made to program offerings.

**Performance Level 4**

Youth participation is embedded in program design. Staff utilize formal and informal mechanisms to engage participants in enrichment development, including ongoing surveys, focus groups, and planning committees. Most activities are designed with participant input and participant feedback. Participants are valued, trained, supported, and regularly recognized as leaders within the program.

**Programming & Activities, Indicator 6**

\*Offers a blend of high-quality academic support, including tutoring, study hall, and/or homework help as appropriate to the program as well as enrichment opportunities in arts, recreation, and health.

**Performance Level 1**

The program only includes non-academic activities, such as creative arts and/or sports and recreation.

**Performance Level 2**

The program includes mostly non-academic activities, such as creative arts or sports and recreation, but occasionally includes academic activities such as science projects. The program provides academic support when participants ask for assistance. Staff do not receive sufficient training to provide appropriate academic support to participants.

**Performance Level 3**

The program provides academic support on a regular schedule, including tutoring and homework help. The program schedule includes both academic and non-academic activities, including a variety of activities related to history, art, science, math and technology, languages, and sports and recreation. Staff members receive ongoing training on best practices in supporting the academic and cognitive development of participants.

**Performance Level 4**

The program provides regularly scheduled academic support, including tutoring and/or homework help. The program schedule includes both academic and non-academic activities, including a variety of activities related to history, art, science, math, and technology, languages, and sports and recreation. Staff members must show the ability to support academic learning before they are hired by providing sample lesson plans or demonstrating knowledge of teaching methods. The program is supported by a certified teacher. Staff members receive ongoing training on best practices in supporting the academic and cognitive development of participants and selecting developmentally appropriate activities that support statewide learning standards.

**Programming & Activities, Indicator 7**

\*Includes activities that reflect the languages and cultures of the participants and families.

**Performance Level 1**

Activities are mostly planned without consideration for the language and culture of the participants. Special events are scheduled without consideration of major religious/cultural holidays.

**Performance Level 2**

Activities are sometimes planned with consideration for the language and culture of the participants. If a participant cannot be engaged in an activity because of a barrier related to language or culture, no alternative is provided.

**Performance Level 3**

Activities are usually planned with consideration for the language and culture of the participants. Participants almost never feel excluded from the program because of a barrier related to language or culture. If a participant feels uncomfortable with an activity, staff members are available to help the participant engage or find an alternative.

**Performance Level 4**

Activities are always planned with consideration for the language and culture of the participants. Participants are not excluded from the program because of barriers related to language or culture. The participants' languages and cultures are often highlighted through activities, allowing participants to express themselves throughout the year. Staff members are trained cultural competencies and program accordingly.

**Programming & Activities, Indicator 8**

Integrates opportunities for responsible decision-making and the development of social and emotional skills.

**Performance Level 1**

Little to no leadership opportunities or areas of responsibility exist for participants. Staff members make all decisions about the program, such as what activities are offered, the types of snacks served, and when participants interact with one another. Participants are told what they are doing and are never allowed to make their own choices. Therefore, they do not develop skills in making responsible decisions through the program. Staff members do not ask for feedback from participants. No opportunity for participant voice exists. There is no explicit social and emotional learning strategy.

**Performance Level 2**

Staff members are not prepared to lead discussions and facilitate activities with a social and emotional learning focus, such as daily check-ins on mood, community circles, discussions of current events, etc. Staff members make most decisions for participants, but occasionally ask a few participants to speak or lead an activity. Participants make basic choices, such as which snack to choose or which chair to sit in. The site has a social and emotional learning framework, but it is not widely adopted.

**Performance Level 3**

Staff members give participants authentic opportunities to make decisions about the program, such as which activities should be offered in the program or which to choose to attend. Staff members support, recognize, and reward participants for making responsible decisions. Staff members are trained in a social and emotional learning framework and value reflection and dialogue. Staff members are beginning to create a youth leadership team to provide input and feedback and assist with developing a positive program culture. A majority of the staff members are able to support participants as they complete tasks on their own or do learner-centered projects. Constructive feedback is provided to challenge participants to move beyond their current comfort level. Participants can often choose from a variety of leadership roles and opportunities in the program. Peer mediation is incorporated into the program's code of conduct.

**Performance Level 4**

Staff members give participants authentic opportunities to make decisions about the program. Staff members formally teach, model, support, recognize, and reward participants for making responsible decisions. Participants have ample opportunities to build social and emotional skills through ongoing supportive conversations with adults and peers. Program offers structured time for youth councils, community circles, and/or restorative justice, and uses frameworks for positive interactions and social and emotional skill development. Participants are given sentence starters to acknowledge personal feeling and resolve conflict. Participants' surveys reflect that the participants feel valued/respected in the learning community. An adult and youth leadership team plans, implements, and assesses all aspects of the afterschool program. Participants receive extensive leadership training and have meaningful voices, roles, and participation. Participants feel ownership of the program and know that they play a significant role in their success and the success of the program. All activities and projects encourage participants to discover their strengths and set and achieve personal goals with support from peers and the staff. Staff members refrain from taking over challenging tasks, but rather use questioning, coaching, and other effective strategies to build the capacity of participants. Verbal and public recognitions and celebrations are provided to encourage and acknowledge self-direction and success. Participants can always choose from a variety of leadership opportunities in the program. Peer mediation is incorporated into the program's code of conduct.

## Programming & Activities, Indicator 9

Provides reasonable accommodations and special materials as necessary for all participants during the program and at special events.

### Performance Level 1

The program is unable to provide most accommodations for youth with diverse abilities and therefore excludes enrollment for some youth. Program leaders may direct families to other programs in the community to meet the needs of their children.

### Performance Level 2

The program provides some accommodations for participants with diverse abilities by providing alternative activities when a participant's level of ability creates a barrier to participation. Some youth are excluded from participating in special events, such as field trips, where special accommodations are not provided.

### Performance Level 3

The program provides a wide range of accommodations for participants with diverse abilities by providing additional materials, resources, and supports that allow all participants to participate in all activities. Staff provide the appropriate accommodations for all participants to participate in special events, such as field trips, where accommodations are provided as well.

### Performance Level 4

The program provides a wide range of accommodations for participants with diverse abilities by providing additional materials, resources, and supports that allow all participants to participate in all activities. Several staff members are trained in inclusive techniques and they ensure that all participants are comfortable and engaged, regardless of their level of ability. Participants are always provided appropriate accommodations to participate in special events, such as field trips, where accommodations are provided as well.

## Programming & Activities, Indicator 10

Employs varied instructional strategies.

### Performance Level 1

Staff do not use diverse instructional strategies and most or all of the program activities are implemented using the same grouping strategy (e.g. individual work, small group activities, or large group activities).

### Performance Level 2

Staff use some diverse instructional strategies (e.g. hook, direct instruction, coaching, modeling, analysis, cooperative learning, stations, etc.).

### Performance Level 3

Staff use diverse instructional strategies with all types of activities (e.g. homework, enrichment, snacks, sports, arts, etc.) being offered in individual, small group, and large group settings. Each staff member tries to rotate the type of grouping strategies they use.

**Performance Level 4**

Staff use diverse instructional strategies with all types of activities (e.g. homework, enrichment, snacks, sports, arts, etc.) being offered in individual, small group, and large group settings. Staff members work together to rotate the types of strategies used across the program, and ensure that all participants are exposed to a variety of activities in individual, small group, and large group settings.

**Programming & Activities, Indicator 11**

Provides regular opportunities to be outdoors, including field trips off site.

**Performance Level 1**

The program does not have access to safe space outdoors and rarely or never goes on field trips or uses other community space. Therefore, participants rarely have an opportunity to be outdoors.

**Performance Level 2**

The program has access to safe space outdoors (or shares safe community spaces) and allows participants to spend time outside on an ad hoc basis depending on the program schedule. Participants may not have regular opportunities to be outdoors. Time spent outdoors is often for unstructured play or sports.

**Performance Level 3**

The program has access to safe space outdoors (or shares safe community spaces) and allows participants to spend time outside on a regular basis each week. Time spent outdoors is used for unstructured play, sports, and community exploration (e.g. nature activities, visiting community resources, etc.).

**Performance Level 4**

The program has access to safe space outdoors (or shares safe community spaces) and allows participants to spend time outside on a regular basis each day. Participants always have regular opportunities to be outdoors. Time spent outdoors is used for unstructured play, sports, and community exploration (e.g. nature activities, visiting community resources, etc.). The program supports a walking transportation system where participants can walk to and from the program with adult supervision instead of taking a bus or car.

**Programming & Activities, Indicator 12**

Provides supports as participants transition across age groups, school grades, and/or school day to afterschool.

**Performance Level 1**

The program does not provide support for participants to transition across age groups, school grades, and/or school day to afterschool. A few participants receive this type of support by individual staff members, but most do not.

**Performance Level 2**

The program intentionally provides some support to participants to transition across age groups, school grades, and/or school day to afterschool, but it is not a core piece of program practice. Staff members are asked to support participants in this way, but this is not included in staff training or assessments, and is generally not a priority. Some participants receive this type of support by individual staff members, while others do not.

**Performance Level 3**

The program intentionally provides supports to participants and caregivers to transition across age groups, school grades, and school day to afterschool, Staff members are asked to support participants in this way, and training on transitions

is provided at staff orientation. Program routines and rituals at the beginning of the program help participants move seamlessly from school to afterschool. At the end of each year, the program works with schools to prepare participants for graduating into a new grade or school (e.g. guest lectures from teachers, field trips to local schools, etc.). All participants receive this type of support.

#### **Performance Level 4**

The program considers supporting participants to transition across age groups, school grades, and school day to afterschool to be one of its objectives and a core piece of work. Staff members are asked to support participants in this way, and training on transitions is provided at staff orientation and during professional development opportunities throughout the school year. All staff use special techniques at the beginning of the program, including clear routines and rituals to help participants move seamlessly from school to afterschool. During the spring and summer, the program works with schools to prepare participants for promotion to the next grade or graduation to a new school (e.g. guest lectures from teachers, field trips to local schools, etc.). All participants receive this type of support.

### **Programming & Activities, Indicator 13**

Offers activities that develop global competencies in participants, build 21st century skills, and prepare them for college, career, and citizenship.

#### **Performance Level 1**

The program focuses primarily on keeping participants safe and engaged after school, and does not focus on preparing participants for college, career, and citizenship. Some activities may develop global competencies and 21st century skills, but they are not intentionally designed to do so or evaluated.

#### **Performance Level 2**

The program considers preparing participants for college, career, and citizenship to be a goal, but does not offer activities specifically tied to this goal. Some activities may develop global competencies and 21st century skills, but they are not intentionally designed to do so or evaluated. Some staff members try to help participants build cultural competence, world knowledge, digital literacy, and other key skills, but not all participants are exposed to these staff members and activities.

#### **Performance Level 3**

The program considers preparing participants for college, career, and citizenship to be a goal, and offers activities that are designed to help participants develop global competencies and 21st century skills. Several staff members try to help participants build cultural competence, world knowledge, digital literacy, and other key skills, and all participants are exposed to these staff members and activities. Participants have regular opportunities to work with peers of different cultures and backgrounds, to learn about world news and events, and to use technology and media.

#### **Performance Level 4**

The program considers preparing participants for college, career, and citizenship to be a goal, and offers activities that are designed to help participants develop global competencies and 21st century skills. Evaluations review how well the program is meeting this goal. The program policies and structure are designed to foster this type of development. Many or all staff members try to help participants build cultural competence, world knowledge, digital literacy, and other key skills, and all participants are exposed to these staff members and activities. Participants have regular opportunities to work with peers and adults of different cultures and backgrounds, to learn about world news and events, and to use technology and media. Participants are exposed to a variety of career paths and understand the experiences and skills needed to attain them.

## Programming & Activities, Indicator 14

\*Uses intentional programming, lesson plans, and curriculum.

### Performance Level 1

The program does not utilize lesson plans, curricula, or outlines to guide program activities. Activities display little planning or preparedness from staff.

### Performance Level 2

Program utilizes some lesson plans, curricula, or outlines to guide program activities. Activities display some planning, preparedness from staff, and include some learning objectives.

### Performance Level 3

Program usually utilizes lesson plans, curricula, or outlines to guide program activities. Activities display planning, preparedness from staff, and include clear learning objectives. Lesson plans are sequential and provide opportunities for participants to develop skills.

### Performance Level 4

Program utilizes lesson plans, evidence-based curricula, or outlines to guide program activities. Activities display planning, preparedness from staff, and include clear learning objectives. A certified teacher or curriculum coach reviews lesson plans to ensure that they are sequential and provide opportunities for participants to develop skills.

## Programming & Activities, Indicator 15

Uses a program schedule that limits participant wait time and disruption between activities and when transitioning from one space to another.

### Performance Level 1

No clear routines or practices are included in transitions. Staff members do not attempt to limit waiting, causing excessive downtime and limited participant engagement.

### Performance Level 2

Program demonstrates some clear routines or practices during transitions. Staff members attempt to limit wait time.

### Performance Level 3

Program usually demonstrates clear routines or practices during transitions. Staff members have practices in place to limit wait time and engage participants during transitions.

### Performance Level 4

Program consistently demonstrates clear routines or practices during transitions. Staff members have practices in place to limit wait time, utilize transitions to reinforce group norms, and provide seamless programming.

## Programming & Activities, Indicator 16

Ensures that supplies are organized, maintained, accessible, and set up prior to activities.

### Performance Level 1

Supplies are not regularly maintained or ordered. Staff members often run out of what they need for activities. Supplies are kept in a number of areas, making it difficult to know where things are. Supplies are sometimes locked up in areas where staff members do not have access.

### Performance Level 2

Supplies are ordered throughout the year, but no formal inventory method is established. Therefore, the program often ends up with too much or too few of each item. Supplies are kept in a number of accessible areas, but staff members generally can find what they need.

### Performance Level 3

A supplies inventory check is conducted several times throughout the year and supplies are ordered as needed. Staff members have the supplies they need for each activity. Supplies are organized by activity type in specific areas and are always accessible to all staff members.

### Performance Level 4

A supplies list is maintained as items are used, so staff members are aware as soon as an order needs to be placed. A formal inventory check is done several times throughout the year to ensure all items have been ordered, and that they are accessible and organized by activity type. Staff members use program plans to determine what supplies they will need ahead of time, and prepare supplies in advance for each day.

## Programming & Activities, Indicator 17

Maintains current and accurate activity schedule with room assignments that is accessible to participants, staff, and families.

### Performance Level 1

The program does not have a written activity schedule or the schedule changes daily. Participants have to ask where activities are each day. Staff members cannot easily direct participants to activities. Participants are not able to plan their participation in activities before the program starts. Families need the help of a staff member to locate their child.

### Performance Level 2

The program has a written activity schedule with room assignments, but it is not always accurate. Participants occasionally get lost going to activity locations. Staff members can usually direct participants to activities, but sometimes have to refer them to the site director. Families need the help of a staff member to locate their child.

### Performance Level 3

The program has a written activity schedule with room assignments, which is updated daily. Participants are always able to find activity locations. Staff members can always direct participants to activities. Participants are able to plan participation in program activities before the program starts. There is rarely confusion about which activities are taking place and where they are being held. Families are able to access the activity schedule to locate their child.

### Performance Level 4

The program has a written activity schedule with room assignments, which is updated daily. The schedule includes a brief description of the activity and which staff member is responsible. Staff members can always direct participants to activities. Participants are always able to find activity locations and know which staff member to ask if they have questions. Participants are able to plan activities in advance. Families are able to access the activity schedule to locate their child.

# ELEMENT 6

## Establishes Strong Links to the School Day

*A quality program has its staff work closely with school staff to ensure that afterschool academic components and activities are aligned with learning standards and contribute to the overall positive development of program participants.*

### A QUALITY PROGRAM:

#### School-Based Programs and Center-Based Programs, When Appropriate

1. \*Meets regularly with principal(s), school administrator(s), and/or designated liaison(s), and teachers from the school(s) attended by program participants.
2. Incorporates programming that aligns with and/or complements learning standards for the different age groups served.
3. Communicates regularly with school day staff to remain informed of the academic and behavioral progress of participants.
4. Allocates sufficient time in the activity schedule for homework help, study hall, and/or tutoring, and has adequate resources, including knowledgeable, well-trained staff and a space that is conducive to a positive learning environment.
5. Is represented and actively participates in the schools' planning efforts.
6. Employs, or the school designates, an educational coordinator to serve as a "bridge" between the school day and the afterschool program.
7. In collaboration with the school administration, allocates time and resources for joint professional development that facilitates the participation of both community-based organization and school day staff.

PERFORMANCE LEVEL				PLAN TO IMPROVE		
1	2	3	4	RIGHT NOW	THIS YEAR	NEXT YEAR

#### School-Based Programs

8. \*Plans for and secures commitment of resources with school principal, when appropriate, and uses a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or School Partnership Agreement (SPA).
9. Communicates with the school and aligns around policies for working with participants with diverse abilities.
10. Works together to establish and follow a common behavioral code of conduct and language that support the social and emotional development of participants.


NOTES:

## Establishes Strong Links to the School Day

A quality program has its staff work closely with school staff to ensure that afterschool academic components and activities are aligned with learning standards and contribute to the overall positive development of program participants.

A quality school-based program works with the school to share information about program participants' needs and progress, to assign staff roles, and to coordinate use of space and other resources. A program that is linked to the school day allows program staff and school leaders to establish regular mechanisms for ongoing communication and coordination. In a true partnership, the school and afterschool program share the responsibility for participants' educational, social, and emotional development and work collaboratively to improve outcomes for participants.

A quality community-based program works with the school(s) attended by program participants to share information about their needs and progress. A program that is linked to the school day allows program staff and school leaders to establish regular mechanisms for ongoing communication and coordination, and ensures that the afterschool program's activities support participants' educational, social, and emotional development to improve outcomes for participants.

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### SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS AND CENTER-BASED PROGRAMS, WHEN APPROPRIATE:

#### **Establishes Strong Links to the School Day, Indicator 1**

\*Meets regularly with principal(s), school administrator(s), and/or designated liaison(s), and teachers from the school(s) attended by program participants.

##### **Performance Level 1**

The site director and principal(s), school administrator(s), and/or designated liaison(s), and teachers have not met or had a meaningful conversation.

##### **Performance Level 2**

The site director and principal(s), school administrator(s), and/or designated liaison(s), and teachers meet at the beginning of the year. Communication is random and mainly focuses on or occurs when there are problems.

##### **Performance Level 3**

The site director and principal(s), school administrator(s), and/or designated liaison(s), and teachers regularly communicate through conversations, meetings, and in writing to ensure the afterschool program runs smoothly and succeeds in meeting the established goals.

##### **Performance Level 4**

The site director and principal(s), school administrator(s), and/or designated liaison(s), and teachers of the schools attended by program participants develop a yearly plan for regular communication, which includes scheduled meetings throughout the program period to ensure that the afterschool program runs successfully. They work together as a team on program planning, goal setting, and decision-making to ensure the program meets individual and shared goals for participants and families.

## Establishes Strong Links to the School Day, Indicator 2

Incorporates programming that aligns with and/or complements learning standards for the different age groups served.

### Performance Level 1

The program has separate and independent goals and activities that do not complement learning standards for the different age groups served.

### Performance Level 2

The program has independent goals and activities that sometimes complement learning standards for the different age groups served.

### Performance Level 3

Program and school staff members work together to understand their missions, goals, and approaches to learning in an effort to integrate and complement learning for participants. Program and school staff members share data in compliance with FERPA to identify participant strengths and needs to support participants effectively. Program and school staff members work together to integrate state and local performance standards and benchmarks into afterschool program activities.

### Performance Level 4

Program and school staff members share curricula, resources, and data in compliance with FERPA. They work collaboratively to decide how instructional practices are effectively integrated to enhance both school day and afterschool learning. Examples of this partnership are evident because the program provides authentic opportunities for participants to learn and practice skills in real life situations. For example, embedding math skills into a cooking class, or improving language arts skills through writing advocacy letters about participants' areas of interest to newspapers or local officials.

## Establishes Strong Links to the School Day, Indicator 3

Communicates regularly with school day staff to remain informed of the academic and behavioral progress of participants.

### Performance Level 1

Program and school staff members operate independently and do not share participants' academic and behavioral progress information.

### Performance Level 2

Program staff members communicate individually with school staff members around participants who are having academic or behavioral problems.

### Performance Level 3

Program and school staff members regularly communicate to share the academic and behavioral strengths, growth, and challenges of participants. Discussions and information sharing focus on supporting participants' achievements and related positive behaviors. Communication highlights strategies that are promising and working, and aims to refine practices that need to be changed to assist the participants effectively.

### Performance Level 4

Formal and informal structures are in place for program and school staff to regularly communicate in multiple ways and share the academic and behavioral strengths, growth, and challenges of participants. Ongoing discussions and information

sharing focus on supporting participants' achievements and related positive behaviors. Communication highlights strategies that are promising and working, and aims to refine practices that need to be changed to assist the participants effectively. The participants and their family member(s) are often part of the conversations with all partners who are working together to support the participants' growth and success.

### **Establishes Strong Links to the School Day, Indicator 4**

Allocates sufficient time in the activity schedule for homework help, study hall, and/or tutoring, and has adequate resources, including knowledgeable, well-trained staff and a space that is conducive to a positive learning environment.

#### **Performance Level 1**

The program does not offer homework help, study hall, or tutoring as a regular part of the activity schedule. Homework help is only available if school administrators, teachers, parents, or participants ask for it. There is no dedicated space for studying; therefore, students who wish to complete their homework must do so in a multi-purpose space alongside other distracting activities.

#### **Performance Level 2**

The program offers homework help, study hall, and/or tutoring but not on a daily basis. Additional time for homework help is available if school administrators, teachers, parents, or participants ask for it. There is limited space(s) for studying.

#### **Performance Level 3**

A portion of the daily activity schedule is dedicated to homework help, study hall, and/or tutoring which is led by trained staff members and/or teachers. Additional time for homework help may be added if school administrators, teachers, parents, or participants ask for it. Appropriate space(s) for studying is available and conducive to a positive learning environment.

#### **Performance Level 4**

A portion of the daily activity schedule is dedicated to homework help, study hall, and/or tutoring which is led by trained staff members and/or teachers. Additional time for homework help may be added or based on staff's consultation with teachers or parents, or if participants ask for it. Space allocated for studying facilitates a positive learning environment, supported by access to reference materials, textbooks, and computers.

### **Establishes Strong Links to the School Day, Indicator 5**

Is represented and actively participates in the schools' planning efforts.

#### **Performance Level 1**

The afterschool program is not currently represented in school(s) planning efforts.

#### **Performance Level 2**

The afterschool program is not currently represented in school(s) planning efforts, but planning committee members from the school sometimes report back planning updates to afterschool program leadership.

#### **Performance Level 3**

The afterschool program is represented in the planning efforts of the school(s). An afterschool program representative shares information about afterschool curricula, teaching methods, and policies with the school(s) planning committee members.

**Performance Level 4**

The afterschool program has a regular representative who is part of the school(s) planning committee and shares information about afterschool curricula, teaching methods, and policies with the school(s). The program representative works with the school(s) to develop action steps to support participants' learning and needs. The school(s) values and encourages the sharing of information about both school curricula and afterschool curricula/program learning goals to ensure participants' achievement.

**Establishes Strong Links to the School Day, Indicator 6**

Employs, or the school designates, an educational coordinator to serve as a “bridge” between the school day and the afterschool program.

**Performance Level 1**

The program does not have an educational coordinator.

**Performance Level 2**

The program has an educational coordinator who is experienced working in afterschool but does not have the required experience in curriculum development, lesson planning, and staff training for the educational coordinator's role.

**Performance Level 3**

The program has an educational coordinator who is a certified teacher with some experience in curriculum development, lesson planning, and staff training. The coordinator observes afterschool activities for quality and provides staff with feedback for continuous improvement. The coordinator reviews most lesson plans to ensure they are age and/or developmentally appropriate for the participants served.

**Performance Level 4**

The program has an educational coordinator who is a certified teacher and a faculty member from the school. The coordinator is experienced in curriculum development, lesson planning, and staff training. The coordinator observes afterschool activities for quality and provides staff with feedback for continuous improvement at least monthly. The coordinator reviews all lesson plans to ensure they are age and/or developmentally appropriate for the participants served.

**Establishes Strong Links to the School Day, Indicator 7**

In collaboration with the school administration, allocates time and resources for joint professional development that facilitates the participation of both community-based organization and school day staff.

**Performance Level 1**

The program does not collaborate with the school administration on a joint professional development plan for teachers and program staff.

**Performance Level 2**

Both teachers and program staff are invited periodically and randomly to attend joint professional development training. These trainings are not part of a formal joint professional development plan between the school and the afterschool program.

**Performance Level 3**

School day and afterschool staff develop an annual joint professional development plan to ensure consistency of instructional and learning practices. The plan is implemented and joint professional development occurs periodically throughout the year.

**Performance Level 4**

School day and afterschool staff develop an annual joint professional development plan to ensure consistency of instructional and learning practices. Professional development is structured in a manner where school day and afterschool staff have opportunities to generate ideas for the program and share promising practices related to positive youth development, academic support and enrichment, behavior management, and individual participant goals and progress. The application of the knowledge and skills learned through the joint professional development opportunities is assessed through program activity observations and is aligned with continuous improvement plans to maximize overall staff performance.

## SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS:

**Establishes Strong Links to the School Day, Indicator 8**

\*Plans for and secures commitment of resources with school principal, when appropriate, and uses a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or School Partnership Agreement (SPA).

**Performance Level 1**

Program and school staff members do not communicate about facility use and resources, and there is no MOU/SPA in effect.

**Performance Level 2**

Program and school staff members decide on use of facilities and resources at the beginning of the year and then communicate about problems when they arise. There is an MOU/SPA, in place but it is not reviewed regularly.

**Performance Level 3**

Program and school staff members communicate and plan together regarding facility use and resources at the beginning of the year. There is an MOU/SPA in place that is followed and revisited a few times throughout the year.

**Performance Level 4**

Program and school staff members communicate and plan together regarding facility use and resources as outlined in the MOU/SPA at the beginning of the year and at regular intervals throughout the year. Day to day communication occurs and all partners work together to ensure optimal use of facilities and resources as well as to identify needs to achieve both shared and unique goals.

**Establishes Strong Links to the School Day, Indicator 9**

Communicates with the school and aligns around policies for working with participants with diverse abilities.

**Performance Level 1**

The program does not work with the school to align policies for working with participants with diverse abilities. If the program and school have unique policies for working with participants with diverse abilities, the policies conflict.

**Performance Level 2**

The program works with the school to align policies for working with participants with diverse abilities. The program staff are aware of the policy, but are not equipped to respond to diversity in the program and ensure the effective inclusion of participants with diverse abilities.

**Performance Level 3**

Afterschool and school staff work together to identify and implement training, share information, and deploy resources that will equip all staff to build their capacity to effectively respond to diversity in the program and ensure the inclusion of participants with diverse abilities.

**Performance Level 4**

Afterschool and school staff work together to identify and implement training, share information, and deploy resources, including specialized school staff such as paraprofessionals, who support the program and build capacity to effectively respond to diversity and ensure the inclusion of participants with diverse abilities. The program ensures that accessible formats and adaptable instructional materials that are available during the school day are also available in the afterschool program.

**Establishes Strong Links to the School Day, Indicator 10**

Works together to establish and follow a common behavioral code of conduct and language that support the social and emotional development of participants.

**Performance Level 1**

The program does not work with the school administrators and the teachers to establish and follow a common behavioral code of conduct and language that support the social and emotional development of participants. These topics are only covered during staff orientation.

**Performance Level 2**

The program does not work with the school administrators and the teachers to establish and follow a common behavioral code of conduct and language. The code of conduct and language used in the afterschool program is not consistent with the code of conduct and language used during the school day. The training offered to program staff on behavior management strategies and techniques is not aligned with the school's behavioral code of conduct.

**Performance Level 3**

The afterschool program staff and school staff work together to develop shared practices for positive behavioral management approaches in order to implement consistent interventions and supports. Program staff training and professional development related to positive behavior management approaches are offered occasionally throughout the year.

**Performance Level 4**

The afterschool program staff and school staff work together to develop shared practices for positive behavioral management approaches in order to implement consistent interventions and supports. This includes program staff training and professional development that is offered regularly throughout the school year and aims to establish a common language among staff, accountability structures, rewards, incentives, and disciplinary protocols.

# ELEMENT 7

## Youth Participation & Engagement

*A quality program provides opportunities for participants to engage in planning, to exercise choice, and to participate in a rich variety of offerings.*

### A QUALITY PROGRAM:

1. Engages participants and adults to promote consistent and active participation.
2. Engages participants and adults to develop and promote a culture of respect and co-constructed disciplinary policies.
3. Involves participants in program design and implementation in a meaningful way.
4. Involves participants in data collection and evaluation for program reporting and continuous improvement purposes in a meaningful way.
5. Engages participants and adults to make activities meaningful, applicable to the real world, and developed around participant interests.
6. Has a culture that encourages youth to take initiative, explore their interests, set goals for personal achievement, and work to meet them.

PERFORMANCE LEVEL				PLAN TO IMPROVE		
1	2	3	4	RIGHT NOW	THIS YEAR	NEXT YEAR

NOTES:

# Youth Participation & Engagement

A quality program provides opportunities for participants to engage in planning, to exercise choice, and to participate in a rich variety of offerings.

A quality program intentionally incorporates meaningful opportunities for youth participation. Participants are seen as assets and take on leadership roles, plan and facilitate meetings, workshops, and/or orientation sessions for their peers, and participate in program evaluation. Participants and adults partner on most aspects of the program. Participant voices are heard and incorporated into program planning.

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## Youth Participation & Engagement, Indicator 1

Engages participants and adults to promote consistent and active participation.

### Performance Level 1

Participants do not know details about how to register or who can be contacted for more information about program registration. Participants are allowed to drop in and out of the program with no formal commitment to regular participation. Different participants are present every day and it is difficult to run sequential activities that require several days or weeks to complete. Participants often decide to sit out of activities and staff do not actively work to re-engage them. Many participants do not seem actively engaged.

### Performance Level 2

Participants generally know which staff members manage program registration. Participants are asked to come to the program on a consistent and regular basis but some still drop in whenever they choose without consequence. The program offers some activities that require several days or weeks to complete and some participants engage in them. During an activity, participants are asked participate, though some do not seem actively engaged.

### Performance Level 3

Staff members regularly encourage participants to bring their peers to the program. Participants and families are aware of who is designated as the contact person for information regarding registration. Participants are required to come to the program on a consistent and regular basis, and a majority of participants attend regularly. The majority of program offerings require several days or weeks to complete, and most participants join these activities. During activities, participants are encouraged to participate and most seem actively engaged.

### Performance Level 4

There is a designated staff member as the contact person for information regarding registration, and their contact information is displayed on all outreach materials and social media. Participants are required to come to the program on a consistent and regular basis, and all of the participants attend regularly. Program offerings require several days or weeks to complete and all participants join activities. During activities, participants are encouraged to join in by adults and peers. Most or all participants are actively engaged. Participant leaders serve as program liaisons, promoting the program's benefits, building relationships, and encouraging more participant enrollment into their program.

## Youth Participation & Engagement, Indicator 2

Engages participants and adults to develop and promote a culture of respect and co-constructed disciplinary policies.

### Performance Level 1

The program's mission, goals, objectives, and activities do not address a culture of respect, and it is not part of community agreements. Adults do not demonstrate pro-social behavior and communication amongst themselves and with participants. Staff members develop discipline policies that are punitive-focused. Participants are told about behavior policies and discipline practices and are expected to follow them.

### Performance Level 2

Respect is part of the program's community agreement, but the agreement is not always enforced. Signs of disrespectful behavior are not always addressed. Adults demonstrate pro-social behavior and communication with participants but inconsistently amongst themselves. Participants and staff do not explicitly work together to identify and develop pro-social behavior and communication. Participants are not formally involved in the development of behavioral practices and disciplinary policies but some of the feedback they give to staff members is incorporated into the policies.

### Performance Level 3

The program's mission, goals, and objectives explicitly promote a culture of respect. Participants are prepared by the staff to work with others through exercises that address leading and following, sharing, and other team-building skills in the beginning of the year. Respect is part of the program's community agreement, and participants know that respecting one another is necessary to being in the program. Signs of disrespectful behavior are generally addressed by a staff member to remind participants of the importance of respect. Participants are formally involved in the development of behavioral expectations and disciplinary policies, and participants sign an agreement to follow them. Staff and participants work together to monitor and support the following of agreements.

### Performance Level 4

The program's mission, goals, objectives, and community agreements explicitly promote and support a culture of teamwork and respect. Participants are prepared by the staff to work with others through exercises that address leading and following, sharing, and other team-building skills. Participants work with staff members, school partners, and family members to create positive behavior policies, expectations, and disciplinary practices, and sign an agreement to follow them. Participants, staff members, and families define and translate what respect and positive behavior looks like and sounds like in different settings.

Staff model, teach, support, acknowledge, and celebrate respectful behavior on a regular basis. Behavior policies and expectations are posted throughout the program space and are revisited several times throughout the year to ensure participants understand them and receive support to follow them. Signs of disrespectful behavior are always immediately addressed by a staff member asking participants if their behavior is aligned and what they could do differently to be respectful. Severe or continuous disrespectful behavior is addressed uniformly and fairly.

## Youth Participation & Engagement, Indicator 3

Involves participants in program design and implementation in a meaningful way.

### Performance Level 1

Participants are rarely or never asked to express their ideas, concerns, and opinions. There is no formal way for participants to deliver feedback about the program and as such, staff members plan and select all program activities. Participants do not have an opportunity to contribute to program planning. Participants are not encouraged to lead or assist with implementing activities.

**Performance Level 2**

Participants are sometimes asked to express their ideas, concerns, and opinions. However, these conversations happen irregularly or only when a problem arises. Participants who express themselves to staff members are listened to, but their suggestions are rarely acted upon. There is no formal way for participants to deliver feedback about the program or formally participate in program planning. Participants have few opportunities to lead or assist with implementing activities.

**Performance Level 3**

Participants are encouraged to express their ideas, concerns, and opinions on an ongoing basis. Staff members solicit their feedback on activities, structure, and policies through surveys, interviews and/or a youth council. Participants who express themselves to staff members are listened to, and their feelings are incorporated into program planning and staff debriefs. Staff members consult with participants throughout the year about activities they believe would be helpful, relevant, and meaningful and other program suggestions and concerns. Staff members then develop the program based on these recommendations. Participants have multiple opportunities to lead or assist with implementing activities.

**Performance Level 4**

Participants along with staff members, family members, and other stakeholders are included on the program planning and leadership team and regularly have formal opportunities to express their ideas, concerns, and opinions. This group discusses learning opportunities and related activities that would be relevant, meaningful, and of interest to participants, and other program suggestions or concerns. They develop the program based on these recommendations and regularly assesses and revise the program based on regular feedback and data collection. Participants have ample opportunities to lead or assist with implementing activities.

**Youth Participation & Engagement, Indicator 4**

Involves participants in data collection and evaluation for program reporting and continuous improvement purposes in a meaningful way.

**Performance Level 1**

The program does not include participants in data collection and evaluation.

**Performance Level 2**

The program includes less than half of program participants in data collection and evaluation. Staff members solicit their opinions on activities and structure, but infrequently and only through informal conversations. Participant opinions are collected by staff members and may be incorporated into the program's evaluation.

**Performance Level 3**

The program formally includes more than half of the program participants in data collection and evaluation multiple times a year. Staff members solicit their opinions on activities, structure, and policies through surveys and interviews. Participant opinions are collected by staff members, incorporated in the evaluation, and always considered when updating the program's plan. Participants are also involved in data collection and evaluation by providing feedback on all aspects of the program to be used for continuous improvement purposes.

**Performance Level 4**

The program formally includes all participants in data collection and evaluation. It includes groups of participants in evaluation planning discussions, and then solicits all participants' opinions on the program's activities, structure, and policies through surveys and interviews. Participant opinions are collected by staff members, incorporated in the evaluation, and always considered when updating the program's plan. Participants are involved in the design of data collection and evaluation methodologies, and are given the opportunity to provide feedback on all aspects of the program to be used for continuous improvement purposes frequently and regularly throughout the year.

## Youth Participation & Engagement, Indicator 5

Engages participants and adults to make activities meaningful, applicable to the real world, and developed around participant interests.

### Performance Level 1

Participants have no or few opportunities to engage in their community through meaningful projects and activities. Participant work and projects are selected without thought to real world applicability, and therefore few to no activities have real world application. Activities are selected by staff members who have not solicited feedback from participants on their interests.

### Performance Level 2

The program occasionally engages participants in their community through meaningful projects and activities. Some activities selected by staff members are designed to have real world application and an impact on the community. Staff members survey participants on their interests at the beginning of the year, and occasionally plan activities that meet those interests.

### Performance Level 3

The program engages participants in their community through meaningful projects and activities on a regular basis. Staff members and participants collaborate to plan projects and activities based on participant interests. They are usually designed to have an impact on the community and are therefore applicable to the real world.

### Performance Level 4

Participants engage in their community through meaningful projects and activities on a regular basis. Participants often learn of community opportunities or generate suggestions for meaningful, relevant, and helpful community opportunities. Staff members seek information from participants, families, and other sources on potential opportunities and needs in the community. Staff members and participants collaborate to plan projects based on participant interests and identified community needs. They are always designed to have an impact on the community and be applicable to the real world.

## Youth Participation & Engagement, Indicator 6

Has a culture that encourages youth to take initiative, explore their interests, set goals for personal achievement, and work to meet them.

### Performance Level 1

There is no opportunity for participants to contribute to the direction of programming or express their interests. No leadership opportunities exist for students to show initiative. It is difficult for participants to become engaged with activities due to limited space and supplies. Participants are not given choices. Rather, they are assigned to activities and tasks. The arrangement of the physical space does not allow for positive interactions among participants, successful implementation of activities, or exploration of personal interests.

### Performance Level 2

At the beginning of the program year, participants set a personal goal they wish to achieve. Goals are revisited to determine progress infrequently or not at all. Program supplies may limit participants' ability to reach their goals. Although supplies are limited, participants are given opportunities to engage in activities that are of interest to them. Supplies and materials are available for some activities, but they are often kept in a locked closet. Participants are seldom asked for their opinions and ideas for enhancing activities. When suggestions are made, they are often not implemented. Although staff members understand the importance of providing participants choices, they are not consistent in doing so.

**Performance Level 3**

Participants are encouraged to provide feedback on the program. At multiple points throughout the program year, participants set personal goals they wish to achieve. Goals are frequently revisited to determine progress. Supplies and materials are always accessible to participants and kept at a central location, which encourages participants to find activities that interest them and help them reach their goals. Staff members provide opportunities for participant choice by administering monthly surveys on program options. The physical space is intentionally selected to complement activities.

**Performance Level 4**

All the staff members provide multiple opportunities for participant choice in their groups, and participants are always encouraged to provide feedback on the program. At multiple points throughout the program year, participants set personal goals they wish to achieve. Goals are frequently revisited to determine progress, and activities are selected to help participants reach their goals. Supplies and materials are consistently stocked, accessible, and visible to all participants. The physical space is organized to allow positive peer interaction, facilitate rich discussions, and promote collaboration on projects. Space is often used as a model for other program providers to learn from.



# ELEMENT 8

## Parent, Family, & Community Partnerships

*A quality program establishes a strong partnership with families and communities in order to achieve program goals.*

### A QUALITY PROGRAM:

1. Communicates with families on matters concerning the well-being and development of the participant.
2. \*Develops, reviews, and updates plan for family involvement.
3. Involves families, the community, and elected officials in program events.
4. Views parents and families as educational partners, and communicates opportunities for literacy and other adult educational workshops to help families support child and youth development outside of the program.
5. Works with families to identify needs, provides families with information about community resources to meet their needs, and makes referrals as necessary.
6. Builds relationships with arts, cultural, and other community institutions to expand and enhance program offerings.
7. Has a parent information area in the program space that is well organized and easy to locate.
8. Involves families in advocacy efforts.
9. Provides a range of opportunities in which participants' work and/or skills can be showcased to peers, families, and community.

PERFORMANCE LEVEL				PLAN TO IMPROVE		
1	2	3	4	RIGHT NOW	THIS YEAR	NEXT YEAR

NOTES:

# Parent, Family, & Community Partnerships

A quality program establishes a strong partnership with families and communities in order to achieve program goals.

A quality program understands that families and communities play an important role in supporting and fostering the healthy development of participants. Creating effective collaborations with families and communities is approached with the understanding that they are assets and partners in the program's learning environment. Creating partnerships with families and the surrounding community is an ongoing and multi-faceted effort. Specific steps are taken to ensure that information and programs are offered in multiple languages and formats.

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## Parent, Family, & Community Partnerships, Indicator 1

Communicates with families on matters concerning the well-being and development of the participant.

### Performance Level 1

No formal system is in place to communicate with families, and communication with families is rare. Families are contacted when problems occur and in cases of emergency.

### Performance Level 2

Communication with families occurs occasionally at events such as family orientation sessions and year-end events. Families are also contacted when problems occur and in cases of emergency.

### Performance Level 3

Communication with families occurs frequently throughout the year, both at events and one-on-one whenever possible. Communication focuses on the participant's strengths and growth, as well as challenges. Families are also contacted in cases of emergency and when there are behavioral, social, emotional, or academic matters to discuss. Written communication, such as newsletters and websites, also provide important information about the accomplishments of participants in the program.

### Performance Level 4

Communication with families occurs frequently and regularly throughout the year; at events, one-on-one, and via e-mail and phone calls. Each family is contacted at least once a year for an update on their child's development and experience in the program. Communication focuses on the participant's strengths, growth, and challenges. Staff members make it known that they care about the participant and want to work together with the family towards the participant's success. Families are also contacted in cases of emergency and when there are behavioral, social, emotional, or academic matters to discuss. Staff members encourage families to contact them whenever they have a question, suggestion, or concern about their child. Newsletters and websites share timely information about upcoming events, and feature participant accomplishments and performances.

## Parent, Family, & Community Partnerships, Indicator 2

\* Develops, reviews, and updates plan for family involvement.

### Performance Level 1

No plan for family involvement exists. Therefore, family involvement occurs occasionally but is not a deliberate aspect of the program's design.

**Performance Level 2**

A plan for family involvement was created by the site director. The plan provides a few opportunities for families to participate, such as attending a program orientation. The plan has not been updated since the program began. Staff members are asked to implement the plan whenever possible.

**Performance Level 3**

A plan for family involvement was created by the site director, staff members, and family members of participants. The plan includes several types of opportunities for families to participate, such as attending a program orientation, facilitating activities, assisting with fundraising, and participating in continuous improvement efforts, such as regular self-assessment. The plan has been updated a few times since the program began to respond to community needs. Staff members are asked to implement the plan consistently throughout the program year.

**Performance Level 4**

A comprehensive plan for family involvement is created by the site director, other staff members, and family members. The plan includes several types of opportunities for families to participate, such as attending a program orientation, facilitating activities, assisting with fundraising, and participating in continuous improvement efforts, such as regular self-assessment. The plan is regularly updated to respond to community needs and to incorporate feedback from families. Staff members are trained during orientation on the importance of implementing the family involvement plan.

**Parent, Family, & Community Partnerships, Indicator 3**

Involves families, the community, and elected officials in program events.

**Performance Level 1**

No formal system is in place to communicate with families, the community, and elected officials. Families and the community are unaware of many program events, are not explicitly invited, or feel that program events are only for participants. Families and the community rarely participate in program events, and/or the few participating families are the same ones.

**Performance Level 2**

Families, the community, and elected officials are sometimes invited to program events, such as when there is space available for them. Therefore, families, the community, and elected officials participate in events occasionally, but not on a regular basis.

**Performance Level 3**

Families, the community, and elected officials are generally invited to program events and regularly participate. The site director advertises events several weeks prior to the event date, and staff members encourage families, community members, and elected officials to attend. Events are planned for times that accommodate families' schedules, such as evening and weekend hours.

**Performance Level 4**

Families, the community sectors, and elected officials are always invited to program events and regularly participate. The site director advertises events several weeks prior to the event date, and staff members and participants encourage families, community members, and elected officials to attend. Each participant is given event invitations to deliver to their family members, and event invitations are created in multiple languages, if necessary. Events are posted in local newspaper, community bulletins, and sent out to the community via e-mail. Events are planned for times that accommodate families' schedules, such as evening and weekend hours, and are offered on different days of the week in order to accommodate various families.

## Parent, Family, & Community Partnerships, Indicator 4

Views parents and families as educational partners, and communicates opportunities for literacy and other adult educational workshops to help families support child and youth development outside of the program.

### Performance Level 1

No formal system is established to connect families to opportunities for literacy and related educational experiences in the community.

### Performance Level 2

The program offers limited family literacy or related educational opportunity during the course of the program year. The need for additional adult education is recognized. A family bulletin is created to keep families informed of program events and schedules in the community, but it is not updated with current information.

### Performance Level 3

A series of family literacy and related educational workshops is launched. Families receive strategies and resources for creating a rich learning environment at home. A peer network and book-lending library are established as a result of the interactions in the family space. Families often inquire about how to navigate the school system, assist with their child's learning, advocate for their child, and support program goals. A family bulletin is created and updated regularly to keep families informed of program events and schedules in the community.

### Performance Level 4

Families are seen as assets and treated as critical learning partners. Family literacy and related educational workshop series are developed and offered based on family input and a community needs assessment. A peer network and book-lending library are established and families are consistently asked for resource suggestions and reminded to utilize the program's resources. The program partners with a local college to increase families' access to course information. A family newsletter containing family literacy information, resources, program offerings, and community opportunities is distributed on a monthly basis. All publications are provided in English and other languages commonly spoken in the community.

## Parent, Family, & Community Partnerships, Indicator 5

Works with families to identify needs, provides families with information about community resources to meet their needs, and makes referrals as necessary.

### Performance Level 1

No formal system is established to communicate with families about community resources. Staff members are not knowledgeable about the available resources to families in the community. Families sometimes learn of community resources by asking staff members for advice. Staff members may or may not have information.

### Performance Level 2

The program becomes aware of and staff members provide families with some information about community resources to help meet perceived needs. The program maintains information on a few of community-based organizations and local resources, and family members can request this information from staff members.

### Performance Level 3

The program works with families to identify needs, formally or informally. Staff members regularly provide families with information about community resources regarding general areas of interest, as well as those identified through family and participant needs assessments. The program maintains information on many community-based organizations and local resources. The information is posted at the program site for families to view, and families can also request additional information from site director. Families receive updated information on a regular basis. Information is regularly updated to include upcoming events, new services, and community news.

**Performance Level 4**

The program works with families to identify needs in a formal way (e.g. surveys, focus groups, assessment tools, etc.). The program regularly provides families with information about community resources regarding general areas of interest, as well as those identified through family and participant needs assessments. The program maintains and updates information on many community-based organizations and local resources. The information is posted at the program site for families to view, brochures are sent to participants' homes, families can request additional information from staff members, and community resource representatives are invited to share their services and resources with families one or more times per year at events or family educational workshops. One or more staff members are kept up-to-date and trained to refer families to specific types of services and resources based on their needs. Family representatives are provided with training on a regular basis and updated on local resources. They use this information to provide outreach and assistance to other families involved with the program.

**Parent, Family, & Community Partnerships, Indicator 6**

Builds relationships with arts, cultural, and other community institutions to expand and enhance program offerings.

**Performance Level 1**

No formal system is established to build relationships with arts, cultural, and other community institutions to expand and enhance program offerings. The program offers some site-based arts and cultural programs.

**Performance Level 2**

The program is aware of arts, cultural, and community institutions offering programming and occasionally takes advantage of a community-based opportunity to expand upon on-site programming.

**Performance Level 3**

The program has built relationships with several arts, cultural, and community institutions and programs, and regularly expands and enhances on-site programming with related community opportunities. These opportunities provide participants with new experiences and learning opportunities.

**Performance Level 4**

The program has built strong partnerships and regularly collaborates with arts, cultural, and community institutions and programs. Staff members and community institution staff work together to develop and enhance programming for participants and their families. Expanded on-site and off-site opportunities are provided. Families, participants, and staff are regularly surveyed to assist with program design and activities. Arts and cultural programs educate and promote the strengths of the population being served, as well as educate on the strengths and contributions of other populations. Programs are offered in the languages of program participants with translation offered as needed.

**Parent, Family, & Community Partnerships, Indicator 7**

Has a parent information area in the program space that is well organized and easy to locate.

**Performance Level 1**

No parent information area is present, or it is not up to date.

**Performance Level 2**

There is an area for parent information, but it is cluttered, missing relevant information, or difficult to use.

**Performance Level 3**

The parent area is well defined and easy to identify when entering the program. All information is attractively displayed, and includes a program calendar, lesson plans for the week, parent orientation materials, contact information for organization leadership, program policy/parent handbook, and relevant community resources.

**Performance Level 4**

The parent area is easy to locate upon entering program. Area includes program information (calendars, plans, contact information) and resources (e.g., on youth development, job training, assistance, and community events not directly related to the program). Materials and resources are attractively displayed and easy to reach/access. Print is large and easy to read. Languages used in the parent information area match all the languages spoken by families in the program. A space for parents to access and utilize computers also exists.

**Parent, Family, & Community Partnerships, Indicator 8**

Involves families in advocacy efforts.

**Performance Level 1**

Parents are not invited to participate in advocacy efforts, or program does not participate in advocacy efforts.

**Performance Level 2**

Parents are invited to participate in advocacy, but times of events are inconvenient or materials are unclear, so parents can't participate. Some parents are involved but other parents are excluded (intentionally or unintentionally).

**Performance Level 3**

Invites families to join legislative events, including call-in campaigns and awareness events, such as Lights On Afterschool. Informs families of opportunities to communicate the importance of the program to other stakeholders. Parents and family members participate in advocacy efforts when invited to by staff.

**Performance Level 4**

Families are represented on advisory groups for the program. The program participates in local, state, and federal advocacy events, with families representing the program. Parents and families participate in calling, letter writing, and petition signing on behalf of the program and the field. Parents attend visits with elected officials and advocate directly on behalf of the program. Parents and families are involved in contacting the media for advocacy, including broadcast, print, and online. Family members lead and coordinate advocacy efforts for the program.

**Parent, Family, & Community Partnerships, Indicator 9**

Provides a range of opportunities in which participants' work and/or skills can be showcased to peers, families, and community.

**Performance Level 1**

The program provides no opportunities for participants to showcase work at the program, or through program events.

**Performance Level 2**

Participants' work is showcased irregularly at the program site. Participants can bring their projects to a staff member to have it placed on display. Depending on the staff members and activities being offered, occasional performances are held.

**Performance Level 3**

Participants' work is showcased regularly at the program site throughout the year. Every participant who completes a project is encouraged to leave it at the site on display before bringing it home. The program has dedicated display space or utilizes temporary displays (e.g. trifold boards, clothesline displays, etc.) that can be set up daily during program hours. Staff members organize performances in which participants can dance, sing, or showcase another talent. Families are invited to watch these performances.

**Performance Level 4**

Participants' work is showcased regularly at the program site throughout the year. Every participant is encouraged to complete a project that can be displayed on site; every participant has their work on display year-round. Staff members organize performances in which every participant contributes. Participants have the option to dance, sing, showcase another talent, or work "behind the scenes." Families and other community members are invited to watch these performances.



# ELEMENT 9

## Program Sustainability & Growth

*A quality program has a coherent vision/mission and a plan for increasing capacity that supports continual growth.*

### A QUALITY PROGRAM:

1. \*Has a written, program-specific statement of mission, vision, goals, and intended outcomes.
2. Involves participants, families, staff, and other appropriate stakeholders in long-term decision-making and planning efforts.
3. Has a long-term plan for sustaining the afterschool program, including a multi-year funding plan with diversified sources of funding.
4. Accesses resources within the community and beyond by building relationships with and seeking support from local businesses and institutions.
5. Cultivates and maintains relationships with advocates for program quality and availability, such as community leaders, businesses, and elected officials at all levels.
6. Has an effective marketing strategy that publicizes the program and its achievement within the school(s) and broader community.
7. Invites board members, elected officials, and other VIPs for afterschool program visits.
8. Participates in broader organized advocacy opportunities to market the afterschool program.

PERFORMANCE LEVEL				PLAN TO IMPROVE		
1	2	3	4	RIGHT NOW	THIS YEAR	NEXT YEAR

NOTES:

# Program Sustainability & Growth

A quality program has a coherent vision/mission and a plan for increasing capacity that supports continual growth.

A quality program has a clear mission, vision, goals, and intended outcomes, and makes time for long-term planning involving all major stakeholders. Sustainable programs use diverse strategies to support their work, including utilizing volunteers, partnerships and in-kind donations, as well as funding from public and private sources. Sustainable programs understand their current strengths, weaknesses, and growth potential, and are deeply engaged in their communities. Sustainable programs monitor changing trends in programming, funding, and other issues in the wider environment and tailor their development strategies accordingly.

## Program Sustainability & Growth, Indicator 1

\*Has a written, program-specific statement of mission, vision, goals, and intended outcomes.

### Performance Level 1

The program mission, vision, goals, and intended outcomes are unclear or have not been developed or written at all.

### Performance Level 2

The program has a written statement of mission, vision, goals, and/or intended outcomes. The statement is published or shared by request. Staff members and stakeholders are informed of the program's mission and goals on an ad hoc basis. Few staff members demonstrate awareness of the program mission, vision, goals, and/or intended outcomes.

### Performance Level 3

The program has a clear, written statement of mission, vision, goals, and intended outcomes. Staff members and stakeholders are informed of the program's mission, vision, goals, and intended outcomes and reminded of them regularly; staff members generally demonstrate awareness of them. The program's mission is posted at the program site/office.

### Performance Level 4

The program has a vision statement and a clearly written mission statement. It has directly aligned goals to achieve the mission and the resulting intended outcomes. Staff members and stakeholders are aware of the program mission and goals and align all activities and actions with the goals and mission. The program's mission is posted at the program site, and are printed on all program materials and documents such as posters, brochures, staff handbook, and parent handbook.

## Program Sustainability & Growth, Indicator 2

Involves participants, families, staff, and other appropriate stakeholders in long-term decision-making and planning efforts.

### Performance Level 1

The site director or executive staff members do not involve participants, families, staff, and other appropriate stakeholders in long-term decision-making and program planning.

### Performance Level 2

The site director and executive staff members conduct long-term decision-making and planning. The site director occasionally involves other stakeholders in informal conversations around program planning and decision-making.

### Performance Level 3

The site director is committed to share decision-making within a team approach. The program has clearly defined goals

and objectives, and plans and makes decisions based on these goals, which are included in program literature. Program staff members are encouraged to work collaboratively with participants, families, board members, or executive staff to plan, develop, and strengthen program quality. Participants, families, board members, and executive staff are viewed as resources and as instrumental to the sustainability of the program.

#### **Performance Level 4**

The program goals and related decisions are collaboratively made by multiple stakeholders. Information on the importance and role of stakeholder involvement and shared decision-making is clearly communicated in all program materials, reviewed during staff meetings and program orientations for families and participants, and are posted at a central location at the site. Training and user-friendly information is provided to stakeholders to assist them with their shared decision-maker role. Stakeholders are invited at different points to reflect, plan, and participate in the decision-making process. Staff members can articulate how their activities and decisions support program goals and take initiative to identify areas of continuous improvement.

### **Program Sustainability & Growth, Indicator 3**

Has a long-term plan for sustaining the afterschool program, including a multi-year funding plan with diversified sources of funding.

#### **Performance Level 1**

Program funding is secured for one year at a time. The program relies primarily on one source of funding, such as a government contract or private grant.

#### **Performance Level 2**

The program has a short-term sustainability plan and uses a two-year funding plan. The program relies mostly on a few sources of funding, such as government contracts and private grants.

#### **Performance Level 3**

Program sustainability is a priority for the afterschool program or the program in partnership with the larger organization/responsible institution, as applicable. The program has a long-term sustainability plan and uses a multi-year funding plan. The program secures funding and income from multiple sources, such as government contracts, private grants, program fees, fundraising, etc. The program also uses a marketing strategy to publicize its importance in the community.

#### **Performance Level 4**

Program sustainability is a priority for the afterschool program or the program in partnership with the larger organization/responsible institution, as applicable. The program has developed a thoughtful long-term sustainability plan, with a multi-year funding plan, which is reviewed on an on-going basis. The program relies on multiple large and small sources of funding and income, such as government contracts, private grants, program fees, fundraising, etc. Additionally, the site director and/or agency development staff regularly seek and often secure unrestricted funds that can be used for general and/or specific purposes as well as in-kind resources through partnerships with other organizations. The program uses a marketing strategy to publicize the importance of the program in the community, and has an advocacy strategy to encourage public officials to support the program.

### **Program Sustainability & Growth, Indicator 4**

Accesses resources within the community and beyond by building relationships with and seeking support from local businesses and institutions.

#### **Performance Level 1**

Relationships with local businesses and institutions are undefined or non-existent.

**Performance Level 2**

The site director tries to build or maintain relationships with one or more local businesses or institutions. Resources from these organizations are small, one-time, or occasional.

**Performance Level 3**

The site director and some staff members build and maintain relationships with several local businesses and institutions. Resources and support from these organizations are occasionally offered to the program. In addition, the site director and/or agency development staff coordinates an annual campaign to ask these organizations for goods, services, support, and financial support, when appropriate.

**Performance Level 4**

The site director and other staff members maintain strong, ongoing relationships with most local businesses and institutions, clearly communicating the relationship between community support, afterschool programming, participant success, and workforce preparation. Resources from these organizations are targeted to specific, agreed-upon areas with progress and results clearly communicated back to the contributors. In addition, the site director and/or agency development staff coordinates several campaigns each year asking local organizations for goods, services, and financial support, when appropriate.

**Program Sustainability & Growth, Indicator 5**

Cultivates and maintains relationships with advocates for program quality and availability, such as community leaders, businesses, and elected officials at all levels.

**Performance Level 1**

The site director's relationship with potential afterschool advocates in the community is undefined or non-existent.

**Performance Level 2**

The program is connected with a few community leaders, businesses, elected officials, or other advocates. The site director knows the advocates and contacts them only when program concerns arise. Local advocates are not fully aware of the program activities and services offered.

**Performance Level 3**

The program is connected with several community leaders, businesses, elected officials, and other advocates. The site director maintains regular relationships with advocates and communicates information on program strengths, achievements, needs, and concerns on a regular basis. Local advocates are aware of and support the program. The site director and several staff members belong to a local or regional afterschool network of providers.

**Performance Level 4**

The program is closely connected with many community leaders, businesses, elected officials, and other advocates. The site director and other staff members maintain regular relationships with advocates and regularly communicate information on program strengths, achievements, needs, and concerns. One or more advocates from the community sit on the afterschool program advisory committee or board. The site director and several staff members are actively involved in the local or regional afterschool network of providers and belong to one or more statewide and national organizations. The site director collaborates with other community groups to advocate and to provide advocacy training to community members and families.

## Program Sustainability & Growth, Indicator 6

Has an effective marketing strategy that publicizes the program and its achievement within the school(s) and broader community.

### Performance Level 1

The program advertises its services on an ad hoc basis. Most publicity is received through word of mouth. There is no public information about the program's services and achievements.

### Performance Level 2

The program regularly advertises its services using a single strategy (e.g., newspaper or online advertising). Publicity is received through word of mouth and a program website. There is some public information about the program's services and achievements, but information is not recent and/or regularly updated.

### Performance Level 3

The site director has a strategic plan to publicize the program. The program regularly advertises its services using multiple strategies, such as word of mouth, a program website, and open houses. There is public information about the program's services and achievements, which is shared with program stakeholders annually.

### Performance Level 4

The site director uses a strategic plan to publicize the program, which was created by staff members, participants, and other program stakeholders. The program regularly advertises its services using multiple strategies, such as word of mouth, a program website, and open houses. There is current public information about the program's services and achievements, which is shared throughout the year with program stakeholders and with the broader community.

## Program Sustainability & Growth, Indicator 7

Invites board members, elected officials, and other VIPs for afterschool program visits.

### Performance Level 1

The program does not invite board members, elected officials, and other VIPs to visit the afterschool program.

### Performance Level 2

The program invites board members, elected officials, and other VIPs to attend one or more selected special events that do not fully demonstrate the importance and the positive impact of the program.

### Performance Level 3

The site director works in collaboration with the appropriate organizational staff and/or school administrators to facilitate afterschool program visits that include board members, elected officials, and other VIPs, such as business and community leaders. The visits are organized to demonstrate the program's importance to the participants, families, community, and beyond.

### Performance Level 4

The site director works in collaboration with the appropriate organizational staff and/or school administrators to develop a schedule and facilitate regular afterschool program visits that include board members, local, state, and national elected officials, and other VIPs, such as business and community leaders. As appropriate, the site director coordinates with the media to obtain coverage of the visits. The visits highlight the breadth and depth of afterschool program services and underscores the program's importance to the participants, families, community, and beyond.

## Program Sustainability & Growth, Indicator 8

Participates in broader organized advocacy opportunities to market the afterschool program.

### Performance Level 1

The program does not participate in organized opportunities to advocate for and market the afterschool program.

### Performance Level 2

The program is aware of organized advocacy opportunities, such as local advocacy days and Lights On Afterschool Day, but participates infrequently.

### Performance Level 3

The afterschool program participates in activities that build a coalition of external support for overall afterschool funding and sustainability. The program prioritizes participation in advocacy activities, such as Lights On Afterschool Day, postcard and letter writing campaigns, petitions to elected officials, testimonials at community board meetings, and advocacy days at local, state, and national capital buildings.

### Performance Level 4

The afterschool program participates in activities that build a coalition of external support for overall afterschool funding and sustainability. The program prioritizes participation in advocacy activities, such as Lights On Afterschool Day, postcard and letter writing campaigns, petitions to elected officials, testimonials at community board meetings, and advocacy days at local, state, and national capital buildings. The program's strategic plan includes advocacy activities. Program or organizational leadership assists with planning and organizing advocacy activities.





# Measuring Outcomes & Evaluation

A quality program has a system for measuring outcomes and using that information for ongoing program planning, improvement, and evaluation.

A quality program has clearly defined goals and has identified specific outcomes to measure progress towards its goals. Goals and outcomes are aligned with the essential elements of a quality program, and the program has a plan for regularly gathering data and evaluating performance against its chosen outcomes. Evaluations should include assessment of program activities, staff performance, and student engagement. Evaluations should be based on quantitative data collection as well as qualitative feedback from staff, participants, families, and other key stakeholders. Evaluation findings should be used to shape plans for future program improvement and professional development.

## Measuring Outcomes & Evaluation, Indicator 1

\*Has measurable program goals and intended outcomes that are aligned with the organizational mission, vision, and identified needs.

### Performance Level 1

The program goals and intended outcomes are unclear, or the relationship between the program goals and intended outcomes and the organizational mission, vision, and identified needs is unclear. As a result, the goals are not measurable. Staff members are unaware of the mission and the program goals.

### Performance Level 2

Broad program goals and intended outcomes generally relate to the organization's mission. Goals are vague and difficult to measure. The relationship of the goals and intended outcomes to identified needs is vague or unknown. Staff members are aware of the mission, vision, goals, and intended outcomes of program, but are not clear how their work contributes to meeting them.

### Performance Level 3

Program goals and intended outcomes are developed based on the needs of participants. Goals and intended outcomes are specific, measurable, and aligned with and support the organization's mission. Staff members meet to discuss the goals and intended outcomes of the program and to ensure the program activities work towards meeting the goals and intended outcomes.

### Performance Level 4

Program goals and intended outcomes are developed based on the identified strengths and needs of program participants. Goals and intended outcomes are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART), and are clearly aligned with the organization's mission. Activities are designed to support both short- and long-term goals. Staff members, participants, families, and other stakeholders are actively engaged in developing, assessing, and evaluating goals and intended outcomes.

## Measuring Outcomes & Evaluation, Indicator 2

\*Develops and/or plans for program evaluation that includes gathering both qualitative and quantitative data.

### Performance Level 1

Program evaluation may occur but is not a planned process. Instead, evaluations are informal and occur irregularly. Evaluations are not consistent over time. Therefore, there is no comparable data for program stakeholders to review.

**Performance Level 2**

The site director develops a plan for program evaluation. The plan includes collecting only qualitative or quantitative data. The collection methods used are informal, and the site director is solely responsible for gathering data.

**Performance Level 3**

The site director develops a plan for program evaluation with input from staff and stakeholders. The plan includes collecting both qualitative and quantitative data, and includes all data necessary to report to funders, parents, and other stakeholders. The site director and other staff members use surveys and observations to gather data. The evaluation plan includes a system for using evaluation results, which includes reviewing results prior to and during program planning and while shaping management and operational practices.

**Performance Level 4**

The site director partners with staff members and stakeholders to develop a plan for ongoing program evaluation. The plan includes collecting both qualitative and quantitative data, and includes all data necessary to report to funders, parents, and other stakeholders, as well as youth development outcomes, academic and cognitive development outcomes, and observable and non-observable aspects of program management and operations. The site director and other staff members use surveys, observations, self-assessment, and other means to gather data, which is then stored in electronic and paper files. The evaluation plan includes a system for using evaluation results to improve the program and inform program decisions.

**Measuring Outcomes & Evaluation, Indicator 3**

Measures participant progress by quantitative and qualitative data to identify outcomes.

**Performance Level 1**

Participants' progress is assessed informally through anecdotal information from participants and/or program staff. Data is rarely recorded.

**Performance Level 2**

The program has a participant self-report method for measuring participants' progress. Data is captured, but accuracy is unknown. Staff members receive anecdotal information verbally from participants, but it is not always recorded.

**Performance Level 3**

The program measures participants' progress in a few ways, which may include participant self-report, staff observation, pre-year and post-year surveys, parent surveys, and other tools. Assessment is integrated into the program and informs the development of future activities. Participants and families are informed regularly of their progress. Staff members record anecdotal information received verbally.

**Performance Level 4**

The program measures each participant's progress in a variety of ways, including participant self-report, staff observation, pre-year and post-year surveys, and parent surveys. The program is in regular communication with the school and families about the participant's progress, in accordance with FERPA. Assessment is integrated into the program and informs the development of future activities. Participants and families are informed regularly of their progress. Staff members also ask families and other stakeholders to submit written anecdotal information, which is kept in participants' files.

## Measuring Outcomes & Evaluation, Indicator 4

Identifies and shares promising practices.

### Performance Level 1

The site director and staff members do not meet to discuss their work and do not participate in professional development events, so they are unaware of what practices are effective.

### Performance Level 2

The site director and staff members meet occasionally to plan and discuss the program activities. Promising practices and related information are shared informally and irregularly. The site director and staff members occasionally participate in professional development events.

### Performance Level 3

The site director and staff members meet regularly to discuss their program activities and track promising practices through writing successful curricula and activity guides so that the promising practices can be replicated. Staff members share these practices among themselves and occasionally with colleagues from other sites. The site director and staff members regularly participate in professional development events.

### Performance Level 4

The site director and staff members monitor and track promising practices through writing up curricula and activity guides. Staff members regularly share these practices at staff meetings. Staff members also share their promising practices with colleagues from other sites through meetings, listservs, and at conferences. The site director and staff members regularly and frequently participate in professional development events.

## Measuring Outcomes & Evaluation, Indicator 5

Makes summaries of evaluations and/or other collected data available to the general public.

### Performance Level 1

The site director does not alert program stakeholders when an evaluation is conducted. The evaluation summary and related data are not made available.

### Performance Level 2

The site director alerts some program stakeholders when an evaluation is conducted through informal conversations. The evaluation summary only is available upon request.

### Performance Level 3

The site director alerts all program stakeholders when an evaluation is conducted through a formal method of communication, such as an e-mail or newsletter. The evaluation summary and related data are posted, and copies are available upon request.

### Performance Level 4

The site director alerts all program stakeholders when an evaluation is conducted through multiple formal methods of communication, such as e-mail, meeting minutes, and newsletters. The evaluation summary findings and related data, including both strengths and challenges, are communicated. The entire evaluation or an executive summary is clearly posted and copies are distributed to all participants, families, partner organizations, members of the Board of Directors, local principals, and other stakeholders.

## Measuring Outcomes & Evaluation, Indicator 6

Creates an internal method for assessing program activities.

### Performance Level 1

Occasional feedback is received through informal conversations with participants, families, and other stakeholders to assess program activities.

### Performance Level 2

The site director has created or located an internal method for assessing program activities. The method uses one type of assessment (i.e. surveys) and is implemented irregularly. Only the site director reviews the information collected. Sometimes the information is used to inform modifications in program design.

### Performance Level 3

The site director, with input from staff members, has created or located an internal method for assessing program activities. The method uses several types of assessment (i.e. surveys, focus groups, verbal feedback, etc.) and is implemented regularly. The site director always reviews the information collected, and staff members are encouraged to review the information as well. The information is used to inform modifications in program design.

### Performance Level 4

The site director, in collaboration with other staff members, participants, and other program stakeholders, has created or collaboratively decided upon an internal method for regularly assessing program activities. The method uses several types of assessment (i.e. surveys, focus groups, verbal feedback, etc.) and is implemented regularly. The site director, staff members, and participants always review the information collected. The information is used to inform regular modifications in program design and delivery. All information collected is stored in paper and electronic files to enable the site director, staff members, and participants to review program progress over time.

## Measuring Outcomes & Evaluation, Indicator 7

Creates an internal method for assessing staff performance.

### Performance Level 1

The site director occasionally observes staff members' performance and gives them verbal feedback.

### Performance Level 2

The site director has a simple internal method for assessing staff performance. The method uses a one-way assessment (i.e. observation) and is implemented irregularly. The site director only shares the information collected verbally with staff members. Sometimes the information is used to inform modifications in program management and operations.

### Performance Level 3

The site director, with input from staff members, has created an internal method for assessing staff performance. The method uses both one-way assessment (i.e. external observation) and two-way assessment (i.e. self-assessment) and is implemented regularly. The site director shares the information collected with staff members. The information is used to inform staff members' goals for the coming year and to collect suggestions to determine professional development opportunities.

### Performance Level 4

The site director, in collaboration with other staff and program stakeholders, has created an internal method for assessing staff performance. The method uses several types of assessment (i.e. observation, self-assessment, etc.) and is

implemented regularly. The site director shares the information collected with staff members, and asks them to reflect on their own performance. The information is used to inform staff members' goals for the coming year and to collect suggestions to determine professional development opportunities. If a staff member receives a negative review, a corrective action plan is developed. All information collected is stored in paper and electronic files to enable the site director to review program progress over time.

## Measuring Outcomes & Evaluation, Indicator 8

Creates an internal method for assessing participant engagement levels.

### Performance Level 1

Occasional participant engagement feedback is received through informal conversations with participants, families, and staff members.

### Performance Level 2

The site director has created an internal method for assessing participant engagement. The method uses one type of assessment (i.e. surveys) and is implemented irregularly. Only the site director reviews the information collected. Sometimes the information is used to inform modifications in program design.

### Performance Level 3

The site director, with input from staff members and participants, has identified a method for assessing participant engagement. The method uses several types of assessment (i.e. surveys, focus groups, verbal feedback, etc.) and is implemented regularly. The site director always reviews the information collected, and staff members are encouraged to review the information as well. The information is used to inform modifications in program design.

### Performance Level 4

The site director, in collaboration with staff members, participants, and program stakeholders, has identified a method for assessing participant engagement. The method uses several types of assessment (i.e. surveys, focus groups, verbal feedback, etc.) and is implemented regularly. The site director, staff members and participants review the information collected. The information is used to inform modifications in program design and delivery. All information collected is stored in paper and electronic files to enable the site director, staff members, and participants to review program progress over time.

## Measuring Outcomes & Evaluation, Indicator 9

Includes feedback from stakeholders in the program evaluation.

### Performance Level 1

Feedback from program stakeholders, such as participants, staff members, families, and community leaders, is not included in program evaluation. They are not involved in the evaluation process.

### Performance Level 2

Feedback from a few program stakeholders, such as participants and staff members, is included in program evaluation on an ad hoc basis, if they volunteer to speak with the site director or evaluator.

### Performance Level 3

Feedback from several program stakeholders, such as participants, staff members, families, and community leaders, is included in program evaluation. Stakeholders are invited to be involved in the evaluation process, and are given the opportunity to speak with the staff leading the evaluation or the evaluator. There is a section in the evaluation dedicated to stakeholder feedback.

**Performance Level 4**

Feedback from all program stakeholders, including participants, staff members, families, and community leaders, is a critical component in program evaluation and is collected on an ongoing basis. Multiple ways to include stakeholder feedback are included as a part of the evaluation design. Stakeholders have the opportunity to communicate directly with the staff members leading the evaluation and/or the evaluator, and their feedback is embedded throughout the evaluation. Stakeholders also have multiple opportunities throughout the year to review and provide feedback on progress evaluations.

**Measuring Outcomes & Evaluation, Indicator 10**

Uses evaluation findings for continuous program improvement.

**Performance Level 1**

Evaluation is conducted on an infrequent basis or not at all. When evaluation is conducted, the site director doesn't share the findings with staff members. The site director rarely considers the evaluation findings when designing program activities and policies.

**Performance Level 2**

Evaluation is conducted on an infrequent and/or irregular basis. The site director shares findings with staff members who ask to see them. The site director sometimes reviews the evaluation findings before designing program activities and policies.

**Performance Level 3**

Evaluation is conducted regularly. The site director shares findings with staff members and program stakeholders. The site director always reviews evaluation findings before designing program activities and policies. The evaluation findings are reflected in changes made to the program design.

**Performance Level 4**

Evaluation is ongoing and evaluative feedback is collected throughout the year. The staff and program stakeholders are involved in all stages of the process. The site director shares findings and feedback with other staff members and program stakeholders. They discuss and brainstorm ways in which to make improvements to the program throughout the year. The site director and staff members always use the evaluation findings to design program activities and policies. The evaluation findings drive the changes made to the program design.





# Informal STEM Learning

A quality STEM program engages participants in exploring, creating, and building skills and knowledge that are applicable in real-world situations and future careers, and that spark lifelong interest in STEM activities.

A quality science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) program engages participants with hands-on, exploratory activities that encourage them to ask questions, build explanations, and collaborate. In pursuing questions or participating in the engineering design process, participants should use practices that engage in the thinking and reasoning of STEM professionals through authentic activities, such as developing and using models, analyzing and interpreting data, and planning and carrying out investigations.

## CHECKLIST:

- ✓ Has staff who prepare the room and materials ahead of time to maximize participant time and participation.
- ✓ Matches STEM materials and equipment to participants, considering interest, ability, and safety.

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## Informal STEM Learning, Indicator 1

Arranges space to encourage collaborative STEM explorations with staff and each other.

### Performance Level 1

The space does not accommodate active learning. There may be loud distractions or limited area for participants to interact with the learning. Activity is largely staff-led with participants listening passively for much of the time. Participants remain seated the entire time with little peer-to-peer interaction. Interactions resemble a formal lecture or classroom structure with little or no opportunities to engage with materials or peers.

### Performance Level 2

Facilitators use whatever space they are given in a way that is collaborative and encourages informal learning, but the space limits flexibility. Some activities are not possible due to space limitations. Some participants can engage with materials or peers, but others must listen and observe without the chance to engage because of the space and setup.

### Performance Level 3

Program space is arranged to encourage participants to engage in group work and group discussion. Adults can converse with participants and join their discussions. Space is configured or selected to minimize distractions and still be appropriate to the specific STEM activity.

### Performance Level 4

The learning environment is arranged and configured to support an informal approach to exploration and collaboration with flexibility and encouragement. The space is well-matched to the needs of the activities offered (e.g. access to a sink if needed, space for group work, computers if coding etc.). The learning environment looks and feels different from a formal lecture experience.

## Informal STEM Learning, Indicator 2

Has structures, such as scheduling, staff development, youth development, etc., which support all participants having access to STEM learning enrichment activities.

### Performance Level 1

STEM enrichment activities are only offered to a select group of advanced participants. STEM enrichment activities are not regularly offered at the site, and instead, the program might feature one-off activities, such as a STEM night.

### Performance Level 2

STEM activities are scheduled at a time that directly competes with highly gendered program offerings, such as cheerleading or football, and participants are forced to choose. Enrichment is limited to only one STEM offering (for example, the only STEM class offered is robotics or math tutoring) that does not showcase the broad possibilities of STEM enrichment.

### Performance Level 3

STEM enrichment is offered across the schedule (daily, weekly, semester, etc.) to ensure that all participants can participate. More than one STEM offering is available, showing a range of STEM topics.

### Performance Level 4

STEM activities are scheduled to avoid conflicts with other enrichment offerings. Activities from a wide range of STEM topics occur to help participants experience how STEM is integrated in life (e.g., robotics, outdoor environment, technology and programming, art and design, fashion design and garment making, food science, etc.).

## Informal STEM Learning, Indicator 3

Structures STEM activities to move purposefully towards the understanding of a STEM idea or development of a STEM practice.

### Performance Level 1

STEM activities are STEM in name only, selected for fun without concern for meaning or learning. No thought of STEM purpose is made when planning.

### Performance Level 2

STEM activities are planned with a purpose by the facilitator. Thought is given to STEM purpose, but the participants are not aware of the purpose even after completing the activity. The purpose is not explicitly supported throughout the activities.

### Performance Level 3

STEM activities are selected from a range of sources (colleagues, social media, etc.) with thought given to the STEM purpose. The facilitator supports understanding the deeper STEM purpose through these activities. Participants are explicitly aware of the larger purpose of these activities.

### Performance Level 4

STEM activities are selected from research-based or peer reviewed STEM curricula that builds towards a defined STEM idea or practice (e.g., learning how energy is converted during photosynthesis or learning how to change one variable at a time in an airplane design). Participants are prompted and supported to discover the larger purpose of the designed learning experience.

## Informal STEM Learning, Indicator 4

Provides participants with opportunities to engage in hands-on activities that require critical thinking.

### Performance Level 1

Participants are passively watching, not manipulating material. Participants may be reading STEM-related material or listening to an expert, but are not answering any questions or demonstrating their learning. No application of learning exists.

### Performance Level 2

There are limited opportunities for participants to engage with materials, or not all participants have access to the materials. Participants have limited opportunities to answer questions or demonstrate their learning.

### Performance Level 3

Participants have opportunities to work directly with tools and materials, and describe or discuss what they are doing during the process. Participants are occasionally prompted to think about the process and make sense of the hands-on experience.

### Performance Level 4

All participants have opportunities to explore STEM concepts and ideas in a hands-on way and are prompted to make sense of the experience. Participants change roles over time, so each has an opportunity to lead, facilitate, build, design, ask, test, and otherwise participate in the enrichment. Participants are hands-on with materials and discuss with peers the purpose, meaning, and value in the enrichment. Participants articulate the problems and questions they are trying to solve through their actions.

## Informal STEM Learning, Indicator 5

Ensures STEM facilitators demonstrate an accurate understanding of STEM content.

### Performance Level 1

Participants' comments and questions indicate that they have a weak understanding of the content presented or that they cannot go beyond simply memorizing or repeating ideas presented during the activity. Facilitator has a weak understanding of content, and repeats errors and myths.

### Performance Level 2

Participants discuss isolated facts and ideas but do not engage in sustained discussion of concepts. Only weak attempts are made to form connections among ideas or clarify understanding. Facilitator's comments reflect accurate content understanding for the most part, but he/she struggles to guide participants to understanding.

### Performance Level 3

Participants are supported to move beyond memorization and fact-recall to discuss STEM concepts in a meaningful way. Facilitator comments reflect accurate content understanding, and she/he is able to guide participants to understanding the content.

### Performance Level 4

Participants are supported to move beyond memorization and fact-recall to discuss STEM concepts in a meaningful way. When participants make errors in understanding, the facilitator's comments reflect accurate content understanding, and she/he is able to guide participants to understanding the content. Facilitators allow participants to explore misconceptions to prove them incorrect, in essence allowing failure and assumptions as part of the process towards deeper understanding of the content.

## Informal STEM Learning, Indicator 6

Provides opportunities for participants to use authentic methods that STEM professionals use in age-appropriate, supported ways.

### Performance Level 1

Participants do not engage in identifiable science and engineering practices. Activities are focused on the outcome and follow a controlled plan. Participants cannot fail because the plan is simple, or adults will fix any mistakes.

### Performance Level 2

Participants are exposed to science and engineering practices. These activities do not capture the authenticity of the practices because facilitators are often doing the thinking and reasoning of the practices for participants and minimizing complexity. Participants observe demonstrations with few opportunities to practice what is being demonstrated.

### Performance Level 3

Participants are engaging in authentic scientific or engineering practices. Participants ask questions and design ways to answer those questions. Participants identify problems in the environment and design and build solutions to those problems. They test solutions and improve designs.

### Performance Level 4

Participants engage in authentic science and engineering practices that allow them to delve deeper into their understanding of STEM concepts. There are opportunities for participants to fail and display resiliency or persistence through potential obstacles or needed modifications in their investigations, data collection approaches, programs, or designs. Facilitators provide age-appropriate guidance to support this process, but participants have the confidence and experience with the process to manage their own practices. Participants are engaged in citizen science (supporting ongoing research), or they are engaging in original research themselves. Participants support the design and building process with other makers, or they design and build prototypes of their own. Creation includes software, games, textiles, models, food dishes, structures, etc.

## Informal STEM Learning, Indicator 7

Dedicates time for participants to reflect on their actions and development throughout each STEM activity.

### Performance Level 1

Staff do not consistently use open-ended questioning strategies and instead are limited to yes/no type responses. Participants are not asked to make sense of what they are learning after engaging in an experience.

### Performance Level 2

Reflection is largely staff-led. Sometimes reflection centers more on surface-level questions, such as *Did you like the activity?*, and less on in-depth questions, such as *How does what we learned relate to our lives?* or *What did the way your car moved on the track tell you about velocity?* Even though the staff plan for reflection time, the conversation is often dropped or rushed due to scheduling. Staff use open-ended questioning strategies and ask participants to expand upon their answers beyond yes/no, however, participant responses remain superficial or simply parroting back a summary of what they did.

### Performance Level 3

Program dedicates time for reflection through its planning process. All activities have built-in reflection time. Reflection is consistently prompted by the facilitator or participant-driven with facilitator support, such as discussion, sentence starters, journals, or drawing.

**Performance Level 4**

Staff and participants ask open-ended questions to help make sense of what they are learning. Reflection prompts help participants make sense of the learning. Reflective questions encourage planning for next steps in the process or project. Reflection includes time to discuss what happened, what it means, and what next steps might be. Reflective activities such as journaling, data analysis, and making conclusions happen frequently. Program uses different grouping strategies to ensure all participants have the opportunity to reflect. Individual, small group, and whole group reflective practices are used. Multiple opportunities for reflection are embedded in each lesson plan.

**Informal STEM Learning, Indicator 8**

Includes all participants in STEM activity, at all levels of the activity.

**Performance Level 1**

Program serves many participants, but some participants are always elevated to leadership roles or opportunities while others are never afforded those chances. STEM activities may only be offered to some participants, with other identities, such as girls, not represented at all. Program leadership does not work to address this.

**Performance Level 2**

Program serves diverse participants, but only some participants lead or participate fully during activities. Other participants are regularly sidelined based on identity. Some participants dominate STEM activities at the expense of other participants.

**Performance Level 3**

Staff plan to ensure that all participants have opportunities to lead and be involved, regardless of identity or status. Staff use strategies to ensure no single identity dominates or monopolizes materials and conversation. All participants get an opportunity to try all roles over time. Program leadership works with activity leaders to ensure this happens consistently.

**Performance Level 4**

Staff plan to ensure that all participants have opportunities to lead and be involved, regardless of identity or status. Staff use strategies to ensure no single identity dominates or monopolizes materials and conversation. All participants get an opportunity to try all roles over time. Program actively recruits and includes participants in STEM activities, paying special attention to under-represented groups (e.g., women, people of color, and people from low-income backgrounds). Program leadership tracks participation by different groups to ensure inclusion across the board. Program uses universal design principles to ensure inclusion of any and all participants.

**Informal STEM Learning, Indicator 9**

Supports participants in recognizing the meaning and importance of STEM activity in their lives.

**Performance Level 1**

No effort is made to connect the STEM content to personal lives through discussion, journaling, or reflection. Staff do not feel prepared to lead conversations connecting the STEM goals to participants' lives. There is no dedicated time in each lesson plan for reflection or making connections to the real world.

**Performance Level 2**

Some connections are made between the STEM goals and participants' lives. STEM activities are presented as stand-alone challenges without connection to larger needs or issues in the community. Even though staff members plan to discuss the relevance of the activity to participants' lives, the conversation is often dropped or rushed due to scheduling.

**Performance Level 3**

There is dedicated time in each activity plan for reflection and making connections to the real world. Reflection is participant driven, and facilitators use a variety of tools to make connections (discussion, sentence starters, journals, drawing, etc.). Reflection usually answers a variation of the question, How does what we learned relate to our lives?. Practices from the activity are related back to real-world applications, and some projects deal directly with issues or challenges facing participants' local communities.

**Performance Level 4**

Participants articulate how STEM is a part of the world around them, and how they apply STEM in their own lives. Program facilitates opportunities for participants to apply STEM to solve problems in their lives or community. Program presents multiple opportunities across different STEM activities for participants to reflect on how STEM is relevant in their everyday lives or communities. Program promotes STEM learning as a way for participants and communities to meet needs, solve problems, and understand the world. Time is made during planning, reflection, and within activities to connect STEM activity to participants, their communities, and the world.

**Informal STEM Learning, Indicator 10**

Supports participants in taking ownership of their STEM learning and sharing their ideas with their community.

**Performance Level 1**

Participants are given no opportunities to discuss their activity or results relating to STEM. All activities are adult-driven with little to no participant participation.

**Performance Level 2**

Some participants have opportunities to discuss their STEM learning. Program staff direct STEM activities with some surveying of participant interest.

**Performance Level 3**

When a participant asks a question, staff makes space to answer the question with an authentic activity such as an experiment, bringing in a STEM role model as an expert, or engaging in research. Staff adjust learning opportunities for participant interest and questions. Staff support participants to share their ideas with the greater community.

**Performance Level 4**

Participants generate their own questions and engage in an experiment or community service project to generate results. Staff support participants to share their ideas with the greater community. Participants feel empowered to discuss what they are doing and why, what they have learned, and what is the meaning to each other, to their peers, their families, elected officials, and other community members.

**Informal STEM Learning, Indicator 11**

Connects participants with STEM professionals from diverse backgrounds to encourage STEM career attainment and/or lifelong interest in STEM pursuits.

**Performance Level 1**

STEM professionals, if they are mentioned or featured, do not reflect most participants in the program. STEM activities may reinforce stereotypes of who does science and who does not. Participants are not exposed to diverse role models with images, materials, or visitors in the STEM field (e.g. people of color, people with disabilities, people from low-income backgrounds, or female STEM professionals).

**Performance Level 2**

The program makes an effort to guide participants towards an understanding that scientists and the work of STEM professionals are diverse. Each year, STEM activities incorporate limited guest speakers, articles, and videos about scientists and engineers who come from different backgrounds. Most STEM activities do not feature an explicit connection to a role model or career.

**Performance Level 3**

The program guides participants towards an understanding that STEM professionals are diverse, with multiple career and/ or role model activities each year. Mentors and volunteers visit the program periodically to support the STEM program. Role model opportunities incorporate individuals who use STEM in their daily lives or careers, such as bakers, mechanics, etc. Materials and resources in the environment reflect or explore how STEM impacts the world around us, including showing role models that reflect the culture of the participants in magazines, books, posters, etc. Diverse people are shown in STEM professions and activities, in person, and through media.

**Performance Level 4**

The program guides participants towards an understanding that STEM professionals are diverse, with multiple career and/ or role model activities each year. Mentors and volunteers visit the program regularly to support the STEM program. Role model opportunities incorporate individuals who use STEM in their daily lives or careers, such as bakers, mechanics, etc. The program embeds authentic mentoring relationships with STEM professionals around shared projects. Community STEM institutions are included in the program (e.g. libraries, parks, museums, government, etc.) as partners for STEM in the region. Diverse role models are represented within the space and their stories are referenced during the enrichment.

*The PEAR Institute developed a 12-dimension framework to define quality for STEM programming in afterschool (Dimensions of Success, or DoS). The indicators in this self-assessment tool were heavily based on those 12 dimensions, and consultation with the DoS researchers at PEAR led to the four performance level definitions as well. While these do not exactly match the DoS rubrics and scoring structure, they are well-aligned and much of the language used here is borrowed from the DoS framework. The STEM indicators were also heavily influenced by the DoS Program Planning Tool, which is available from the PEAR Institute web site (<http://www.thepearinstitute.org>).*



# CONCLUSION

Congratulations for taking important first steps toward strengthening the quality of your program! As mentioned before, performing the self-assessment is an ongoing process that must be consistently revisited after the assessment has been completed.

Regardless of where you are in the process, the New York State Network for Youth Success hopes that this User's Guide has provided you with insight, tools, and inspiration to advance your quality improvement efforts to the next level. We wish you the best of luck as you mobilize your afterschool community to continuously strengthen its efforts to provide participants with positive, enriching experiences.

We also welcome your questions and feedback as you incorporate the QSA Tool into your program planning efforts. Please visit our website at <http://networkforyouthsuccess.org/qsa/>.





# APPENDIX II

## ACTION PLAN FOR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

**Organization/Site:**

**Point Person/Facilitator:**

**Target Element:**

**Goal 1:**

**Indicators/Scores showing need:**

**Additional Information:**

**Change Needed:**

Activities to Create Improvement	Person Accountable	Begins	Ends	Check In Points	Resources	Staff Development:

# APPENDIX III

## S.M.A.R.T. GOALS

**Goal:**

**Specific:** What will the goal accomplish? How and why will it be accomplished?

**Measureable:** How will you measure whether or not the goal has been reached (list at least one or two indicators).

**Achievable:** Is it possible? Have others done it successfully? Do you have the necessary knowledge, skills, abilities and resources to accomplish the goal? What challenges might you face in achieving this goal?

**Results-focused:** What is the reason, purpose, or benefit of accomplishing the goal? What is the result (not including the activities that lead to the result) of the goal?

**Time-bound:** What is the established completion date and does that completion date create a practical sense of urgency?

**Revised goal:**

# APPENDIX IV

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Conducting a self-assessment is complementary to creating a professional development plan for staff. Below is a template, developed by the Partnership for After School Education (PASE), for determining staff professional development needs. After needs have been identified, this template can assist with determining the type of training and information that would be most useful to the entire staff.

### PASE Professional Development Planning: A Tool for Afterschool Supervisors

In order to develop a training plan for your staff, you can use this tool as a first step towards identifying skills and needs of each individual staff person. This process should be completed during an individual meeting between you and each staff person. Once you have determined all of the skills each person has and needs, you can look for commonalities across the entire staff to determine group training and where there are differences, you can work with each staff person to identify professional development opportunities that are appropriate for him/her.

<b>STAFF</b>	Name of staff person	
<b>JOB</b>	Job title with brief description of job function/responsibilities	
<b>SKILLS/KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED</b>	What key skills & knowledge are required for this person to successfully fulfill their job duties?	
<b>HAVE</b>	What key skills & knowledge does this person already have?	
<b>NEED</b>	What key skills & knowledge does this person still need?	
<b>FULLFILLING NEED</b>	What kind of training and support will help fill the individual needs? Complete this for any needs that don't overlap with needs that are shared by most of the other staff.	

<b>SHARED STAFF NEED</b>	Based on your individual meetings with staff, what are three highest priority skills & knowledge areas of need shared by many of your staff? (e.g. 70% of staff need a better understanding of children's stages of development or 80% of staff need to learn how to create effective lesson plans)	
<b>RESOURCES</b>	What resources can the agency tap into for training, support, and/or knowledge-building for your staff's high priority needs?	

### Strategies & Resources for Fulfilling Individual Staff Needs



Individualized coaching/mentoring – Can be provided by you, a peer and/or by an outside technical assistance provider.



Off-site training – Staff can attend training in the form of local workshops, seminars, regional or national conferences, etc.



Shadowing – staff can visit other youth programs to shadow a specific staff person or observe several activities.



Higher education – staff can matriculate into an institution of higher education for certificate or degree-bearing programs.

# APPENDIX V

## QUALITY INDICATORS TO BE ADDRESSED PRIOR TO PROGRAM START-UP

### ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE

- Does your program provide a stimulating, engaging, welcoming, and supportive environment for all participants?
- Is the program space safe, clean, and appropriately equipped?
- Does your program develop, implement, and share approved safety plans and procedures with staff, families, and host school as applicable?
- Does your program provide effective supervision of participants by an approved adult at all times?
- Does your program develop and manage effective arrival and dismissal procedures and plans for safe travel home?
- Does your program provide healthy and nutritious snacks and/or supper?
- Does your program remain aware of, record, and support staff to address the mental and physical needs of participants in compliance with HIPAA and FERPA?

### ADMINISTRATION & ORGANIZATION

- Does your program establish and maintain a centralized database of participant and program information, including participant attendance data, which is regularly updated and monitored?
- Does your program document where participants are during program hours, including arrival and dismissal?

- Does your program provide adequate security for the program?
- Does your program have an approved budget that is reviewed and adjusted periodically?

### RELATIONSHIPS

- Does your staff respect and communicate with one another and provide role models of positive adult relationships?
- Does your staff interact with families in a comfortable, culturally sensitive, and welcoming way?
- Does your staff treat participants with respect, listen to what they say, and have structures in place to encourage participant/adult relationships?
- Does your staff embrace the diversity of the cultures and languages of participants?
- Does your staff embrace the diversity of gender expression/ identity and sexual orientation?

### STAFFING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Is your program committed to professional development and a culture of learning, as evidenced by the director and staff attending training and facilitating post-training group reflection as part of a continuous improvement system?
- Does your program recruit, hire, and develop staff who reflect the diversity and culture(s) of the community?

- Does your program implement a standard orientation including organization/program culture, mission and goals, handbook, and professional expectations?
- Does your program ensure staff members have competence in instructional strategies and content specific areas where appropriate?

### PROGRAMMING & ACTIVITIES

- Does your program provide activities that reflect the mission and goals of the program?
- Does your program feature activities that are developmentally appropriate for the age and skill level of the participants and allow participants to develop new skills during the program year?
- Does your program offer project-based, experiential activities that promote creativity, reflect the interests of participants, and provide opportunities for skill development and application of knowledge?
- Does your program offer a blend of high-quality academic support, including tutoring, study hall, and/or homework help as appropriate to the program as well as enrichment opportunities in arts, recreation, and health?
- Does your program include activities that reflect the languages and cultures of the participants and families?

- Does your program use intentional programming, lesson plans, and curriculum?

### ESTABLISHES STRONG LINKS TO THE SCHOOL DAY

- Do you meet regularly with principal(s), school administrator(s), and/or designated liaison(s), and teachers from the school(s) attended by program participants?
- Do you plan for and secure commitment of resources with school principal, when appropriate, and use a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or School Partnership Agreement (SPA)?

### PARENT, FAMILY, & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- Does your program develop, review, and update a plan for family involvement?

### PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY & GROWTH

- Does your program have a written, program-specific statement of mission, vision, goals, and intended outcomes?

### MEASURING OUTCOMES & EVALUATION

- Does your program have measurable program goals and intended outcomes that are aligned with the organizational mission, vision, and identified needs?
- Does your program develop and/or plan for program evaluation that includes gathering both qualitative and quantitative data?

# ABOUT US



## **About New York State Network for Youth Success:**

The New York State Network for Youth Success is the statewide network for afterschool, summer, and expanded learning opportunities. The mission of the Network is to strengthen the capacity and commitment of communities, programs, and professionals to increase access to high-quality programs and services beyond the traditional classroom. The Network convenes partners across New York State, including its regional afterschool network affiliates, to support the field and promote increased quality and availability of afterschool, summer, and expanded learning opportunities. The New York State School-Age Care Credential and Afterschool Program Accreditation are administered by the Network. In addition, the Network offers professional membership, statewide professional development opportunities, and advocacy on behalf of the field. For more information, visit [www.networkforyouthsuccess.org](http://www.networkforyouthsuccess.org).

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While this instrument can serve many purposes, using it does not confer any credential.  
If you are interested in seeking accreditation for your program, please visit the Network for Youth Success' website  
at <http://networkforyouthsuccess.org/accreditation/>.